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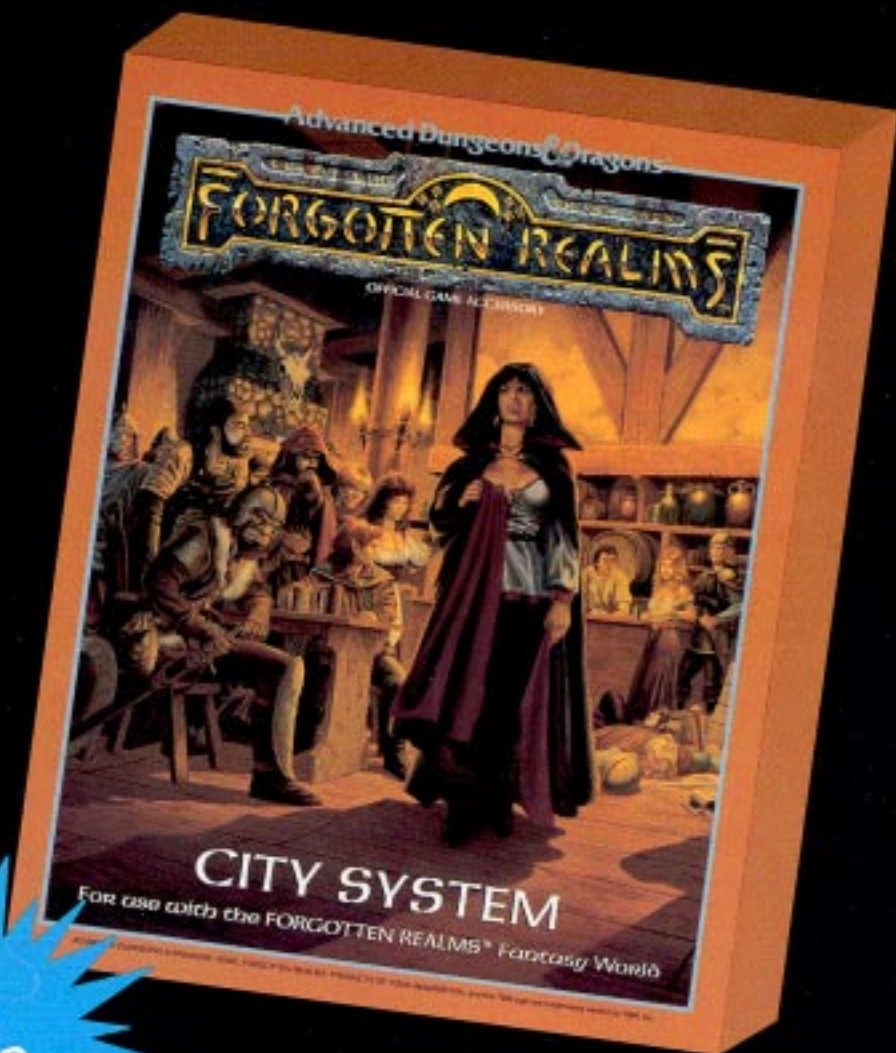
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M A G A Z I N E

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## COVER

Ken Widing's cover work, "Holding Court," shows that one need not be human to rule a city or nation. A lamia noble is particularly suited to rulership, being able to command obedience merely by touch. But, as the FIEND FOLIO® tome warns, lamias are also "given to outbursts of senseless violence." We wish her captive luck.



# LETTERS

*What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CR2 4AD, United Kingdom.*

## Wild rolls

Dear Dragon:

The berserker in "The Wild Warriors" (from DRAGON issue #133) looks to be a more reasonable class than you often present. A point to clarify concerns how the berserker is rolled up. Does he use the same system as the barbarian under Method V (*Unearthed Arcana*, page 74)?

David Carl Argall  
La Puente CA

*Berserkers, given their extraordinary minimum strength and constitution scores, may use the fighter/barbarian die rolls from Method V. However if this class is used as a PC, the DM may change the number of dice rolled for wisdom, charisma, and comeliness to 3 each.*

## Pointed problem

Dear Dragon:

I'm writing in response to the barbed arrow described in issue 133's "Bazaar of the Bizarre." It says if the arrow is hastily removed, the victim takes 1-2 hp damage. What if a character doesn't have the 2-8 rounds to properly remove the arrow because he is engaged in combat?

Doug Gibson  
Walkersville MD

*The victim takes no damage if he doesn't have time to remove the arrow. However, the DM could have additional damage accumulate if the arrow isn't removed within a certain time period (say, about one hour). While we're on the subject, the description of the wooden arrow in the same article should have said that it does 1d6-1 hp damage.*

## British computers

Dear Dragon:

Your computer column, good as it is, holds no interest to owners of the most popular English computers: Amstrad and Spectrum. If you could include the occasional review or tip for these systems, I am sure many readers would be greatly obliged.

Stuart Elden  
Colchester, Essex, U.

*European readers are encouraged to send their tips for their own favorite computer games to the authors of "The Role of Computers" column. Just write to: Hartley and Patricia Lesser, 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon CA 94583, U.S.A. You can also write to: "The Role of Computers," DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, U.K.; your mail will be forwarded to TSR, Inc., in Wisconsin, and we will forward it to the Lessers.*

## Farewell to Wormy

Dear Dragon:

I am not a regular subscriber to DRAGON Magazine, but I try to read it as much as possible. However, in the past two issues, I have missed "Wormy." Was there some announcement, or has the strip been cancelled?

Jon Busky  
Baltimore MD

*We regret to announce that "Wormy" will no longer appear in DRAGON Magazine. We are looking into the possibility of adding another graphic series in the future.*

## Perception plus

Dear Dragon:

In issue #133, the article about perception ("Notice Anything Different?") is an excellent one. I've played AD&D® games for years and have seen many different methods of deciding if a PC noticed something or not, and none of them ever seemed quite right. Adding perception as another ability score is a great solution, but a question was raised by the article. It states that perception was created as an *eighth* character ability score. What is the *seventh* ability score?

M. A. Metcalf  
Toledo OH

*The seventh (and often unused) ability score is comeliness, described in Unearthed Arcana, pages 6-7.*

## The National Game Convention

Well, the month of August is upon us, and that means the GEN CON® Game Fair is soon to follow. This year, however, things will be different as the oldest game convention joins the number-one adventure game fair to form the first-ever GEN CON®/ORIGINS™ Game Fair. This "gaming event of the decade" brings together the two largest gaming conventions in the U.S. in a landmark effort of cooperation and organization. Odd, isn't it, how time changes attitudes and opinions? It wasn't always like this. The GEN CON/ORIGINS Game Fair has taken years to coordinate and orchestrate. It is an event that would have never happened in the past.

Formerly, relations between the GEN CON and ORIGINS Game Fairs were strained. The gist of the debate was: Which event was *the* national wargame convention? GEN CON Game Fair organizers felt their convention was the national convention because it was the oldest (having started in 1968). ORIGINS planners claimed their convention had the national scope that the "regional" GEN CON Game Fair lacked. Heated words often flew in both directions.

In "What is the National Wargame Convention" (*The Strategic Review*, December 1975), a GEN CON Game Fair supporter voiced strong opinions. "Now AH [The Avalon Hill Game Company] intimates that Origins was the sole 'national' convention. . . . Somehow, one is also led to believe that the event was also the largest. Interesting contentions, but they are just not true. . . it seems clear that GenCon still retains the crown. . . ."

Time has a way of softening harsh words. Over the past 13 years, differences have been rectified to allow a cooperative effort heretofore improbable. Now it's all rather pointless to bicker over which convention is better. And as for the gist of the argument, "Which is the national wargame convention?" — you'll see it for the first time later this month.





# FORUM

The "Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: The Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: The Forum, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to the "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys, so we may read and understand your comments.

Having looked at the articles in issues #130 and #131 about illusions, I think I have another system. Say that a 7th-level illusionist decides to cast a spell that will allow him to conjure three illusory goblins. In the Monster Manual, goblins have 1-1 HD. The illusionist wants three of them, which makes a total of 3-3 HD. It is assumed that the target gets a saving throw to disbelieve the spell cast. Take the level or hit dice of the caster and compare it to the hit-die total of the illusion. If the level of the caster exceeds the total hit dice of the desired illusion, the target gets a saving-throw penalty, this being the difference between the level of the caster and the hit dice of the illusory monsters. If the level of the caster is less than the hit dice of the illusion, the target gets a bonus, this being the difference between the hit dice of the illusory monsters and the level of the caster.

Optionally, the DM could allow a bonus or penalty based on intelligence or wisdom. Unless the bonus or penalty to the hit-die rating of an illusion equals or is greater than eight, ignore the hit-die bonus or penalty. If it is greater than eight, divide the modifier by eight. Ignoring all fractions, add the result to the hit-die total. For illusory objects, a modified system is used in

which the DM assesses a hit-die value to the illusion. For example, a pit would be 1 HD, a covered pit would be 2 HD, and a covered pit with spikes 4 HD; with all of the above and snakes, add the hit-die value of the snakes. After the hit-die value has been found, continue normally with the rest of the saving-throw procedure.

Aaron Goldblatt  
Fort Worth TX

I would like to respond to Richard Devens's comments in issue #132 concerning my own article on shields in issue #127. His first argument is that making shield-use a weapon proficiency is unfair to fighters and rangers — the former because the fighter needs four starting weapons, the latter because a ranger has many types of weapons he must learn before considering anything else. Mr. Devens goes on to say that such proficiency with a shield should be assumed as part of normal training.

It seems that only nonfighter classes would be able at first to take advantage of the system, but in my experience as a DM, I don't see that this holds true. Players of fighters do not generally take four different weapons at 1st level. With weapon specialization being so much of an advantage, nearly all fighters I know double-specialize in something, then take a long-range weapon. Why not? The rules allow it, and it gives you extra attacks and extra attack-roll bonuses. This type of behavior tends to make the fighter class unbalanced. However, if you present this marvelous way to gain a better armor class through weapon proficiencies, you can wean some of those fighters from the offense kick.

As for the ranger, he really doesn't have much of a restriction on weapons with which he becomes proficient. As stated on page 22 in *Unearthed Arcana*, a ranger must use his first

four weapon proficiencies on four different weapons unless he decides to specialize in some weapon — which means he could quite possibly be 22nd level before he is finally specialized in all of them (by becoming specialized in a bow, double specialized in a sword and an axe, and finally specialized with a dagger). It wouldn't hurt to allow rangers to become proficient with a shield, too.

It is right to assume that the use of a shield is taught in normal 1st-level training of a fighter or ranger. But it is also part of the training of any shield-using class. This system reflects further interest in and use of the shield on the part of the character, thus improving performance with it as weapon specialization does.

Richard doesn't agree with the use of the mantlet at all, reasoning that it is a large obstacle between attackers. This would only be true if the user of the shield was simply hiding behind the mantlet and there was no way around, in which case the mantlet could be considered to be a wall. But if a mantlet-user is going to attack, then he's going to have to expose himself to be attacked; if he's not proficient, he will suffer the "to hit" modifiers: -2 for a large shield and -3 for a mantlet. Also, there is no reason to penalize a character's armor class if he sets a weapon for a charge. A shield plays no part in it, as the weapon types listed as being usable for that maneuver extend beyond the shield (DMG, page 66).

Also stated in his letter is the idea that an unsuccessful pummel, pin, or shield-rush will leave an attacker more exposed to counterattack than normal. If this were true, wouldn't the attacker also leave himself more vulnerable after a missed sword swing? He would be just as surprised by the miss. Leaving oneself open for attack after an attack is already accounted for in the character's final armor-class value. You cannot assume that the counterattack is always on the advantageous side.

Mr. Devens's final point is a good one. A shield could be counted as cover against missile fire if it is large enough to cover the being's entire body without having to be moved around for defense. This would make the mantlet the only shield useful for this purpose to man-size beings. An attack on a character defending in such a manner would be modified by the table on page 64 of the DMG (i.e., a +10 armor-class bonus).

Tim Merrett  
Logansport IN

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## AMAZING<sup>®</sup> STORIES



The background suggestions (for Mayfair's DCTM HEROES game) in the article "A Little Less Super" (issue #132) helped. But the ability to roll 1d10 for multiple origins and the ability to use multiple origins if it came up again allow some rather unrestrained and overpowered characters. I quit with 21 rolls left on one character; I first got lucky, then got tired.

My suggestion would be to change the tables. The first change is to have a table as follows:

1d100	Extra points
01-50	2d50
51-75	2d50 + 50
76-90	3d100 + 100 (400 maxi)
91-95	4d100 + 200 (600 maxi)
96-99	5d100 + 300 (800 maxi)
00	1,000

The second table would be the one for the origin of those extra points. That table could use the current table (but roll 1d2 on multiple origins). That way, you wouldn't get anyone rolling up 32,000 + point heroes on the same table that gives you 280-point heroes. (As it is, I'm letting the table do 252-point heroes as well as 1,259-point heroes — a bad spread, but not as bad).

Think about it. Would you allow a previous-experience table for the AD&D® game that produced a range from 1st level in one class to 25th level in several classes?

Steve Marsh  
Wichita Falls TX

Despite the critics, there are good reasons why we give experience for magic and treasure. The primary one is that we need some source of experience besides killing monsters. If a fighter gained experience just from battle, he would have killed about 150 orcs by the time he reached 2nd level. That is an obvious impossibility when we consider that those we could classify as real-life, high-level fighters may have killed a score or two. Another comparison comes from the world of boxing; the longest such career without a loss (death in AD&D game terms) among major fighters is 49 fights — far short of 150, much less the thousands needed to reach name class. We could increase the experience per monster to more reasonable levels, but we still end up with a dull game in which the only matter of interest is killing monsters. In real life, money is a major motive, and we don't want to slight its power in AD&D games, either.

Training is sometimes suggested, but training is dull, to be kept in the background where it won't interfere with the game. By giving experience points for money, we can merely assume much of the money is used for training which occurs off-camera where we are not bored by it. Giving experience points for various actions (spells cast, locks picked, etc.) can be tremendously complex and still greatly favors one class over another. Try to dream up a system that wouldn't ruin a druid if all his time was spent in the city, or keep a thief down if he lives in the forest. Again, experience for money allows the party to remain at a common level (or to advance a particular player if the party chooses to split the loot that way).

"Money-experience" is not a perfect system, but the alternatives are worse.

David Carl Argall  
La Puente CA

This letter contains some thoughts on TSR's LANKHMAR™: City of Adventure supplement and campaigns in general. I find the supplement

interesting simply to read, and as a fan of Fritz Leiber, I'm pleased to see his work treated generally well.

While reading the adventures of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, I compared them to the adventures into which a DM might throw his players and to the way that magic and magical items are controlled. I quickly came to the conclusion that Mr. Leiber is a very good DM, as well as a good writer. Nowhere is a sorcerer a pushover, nor is a sorcerer too difficult to defeat. The stories also show that reasonably intelligent men and women wielding swords can prove to be worthy adversaries for a magic-user. The stories add up to a nicely balanced campaign, and the Rime Isle stories are especially interesting, since the Norse pantheon is so popular with other DMs. Any of the stories could be subtitled thus: "A Discourse on How to Adventure Against Mighty Foes, and How It Can Be Satisfying Without Finding Gold as a Reward!"

I also found that on at least one occasion, Fafhrd possessed a magical blade. In "The Clouds of Hate," his sword Graywand hums a warning! Obviously, that's a sword +1 that detects evil in a 2" radius. Well, maybe being a superstitious barbarian (as opposed to a pragmatic citizen of southern cities) enabled him to be attuned to supernatural vibes, but I think of the sword as a product of sorcerous crafts.

And now to my campaign in particular. Contradictions appear within the stories; this was inevitable, because they were written over a number of years. Those contradictions allow any DM a great deal of leeway to customize the background for his own use. A specific example is the Trollstep Mountains. Why are they called that? Because trolls are said to live there. Yet, in "Rime Isle," trolls are mentioned and the Mouser has not heard of the word! Elsewhere in the series, giants and satyrs are mentioned, but as though they were fairy tales. This might be a liberty, but in my version of Nehwon, giants, trolls, and ogres do exist (if there are trolls, ogres cannot be too far behind!). Also, blue, black, and white dragons are known to roam far-off lands.

Having ogres allows half-ogre PCs to exist. In addition, ice gnome PCs can be found. These last cannot be illusionists — but they do receive an extra hit die at 1st level; that is, fighters get 2d10, thieves receive 2d6, etc. I also allow the ice gnomes to have bonuses of +1 per 4½ points of constitution to saving throws vs. ice magic. Naturally, they have difficulty with Lankmar's hot climate. Both races are infrequently met, but it adds to our enjoyment.

So, we have an already fascinating background courtesy of Mr. Leiber, with the house rules all DMs indulge in.

Ron L. Newsome  
Melbourne, Australia

I would like to point out two facts concerning Tom Griffith's article "The Wild Warriors" in issue #133. First of all, the comeliness attribute of the berserker does not *naturally* have to be less than or equal to 9. Some of the berserkers who served as personal bodyguards to Roman generals would have been good looking were it not for the fact that they: 1) covered their entire bodies with bizarre paints and tattoos, 2) wore long hair in a society where bearing was strict and military, and 3) were generally unkempt, all of which could effectively lower their comeliness to 9.

No contentions about the limit of 9 on wisdom and charisma; going back to the same example, one sees that those berserkers, with their

unswerving loyalty to a master no matter what the circumstances (berserkers were preferred by some Roman generals because they could not be bribed, nor would they ever turn against their masters), and their usually stoic vigil and mien fit the limit of 9 perfectly. A berserker in a berserker-oriented society might have a higher charisma in that society only, though.

Secondly, the berserkergang ability was not limited to berserkers alone but to any warrior savage enough in his devotion to Odin, as given in history and fiction. For example, in the book *King of the Wood*, the skald (bard) of Odin, a very charismatic person, possessed the berserkergang ability in combat, whereas the main hero, the warrior Hring, less evidently possessed the ability, being only described as "overtaken by a red haze." With this, DMs should judge accordingly in how they run, if at all, such a class and ability in their campaigns.

John H. Chang  
Lynchburg VA

This letter is being written in response to Mark Shipley's letter in issue #132, concerning cavaliers' fighting and jousting abilities. There are several things he overlooked.

To begin with, he advises attacking the horse first. Any cavalier worth his shield would have the attacker whittled down to half his hit points before the latter could kill the horse. Don't forget the horse's attack modes, either.

Next, he claims that the weapon-specialization bonus to attacks per round afforded to fighters, rangers, and barbarians would outweigh a cavalier's better armor class. Not so. A cavalier's ability with weapons of choice would bring her up to at least a minor advantage, considering all of her attack bonuses. A better armor class would only increase that advantage.

Additionally, Mr. Shipley seems to have forgotten the detail that makes cavaliers so difficult to hit: their superior parrying ability. If the example of Scud and Allycia is used, Allycia would have Scud dead without a scratch.

Next, he believes that the cavaliers' honor and chivalry codes are detrimental to their abilities. Possibly, but in all probability they will serve to prevent too many people from being killed by cavaliers.

He also seems to think that a cavalier's honor system is a way of proclaiming a holier-than-thou attitude. Again, not so. The cavalier's honor system is a basis for bringing a civilizing aspect to an otherwise chaotic and barbaric society.

Finally, Mr. Shipley states that an alignment change will strip a cavalier of his or her knightly abilities. According to the *Unearthed Arcana* book, evil cavaliers could and do exist.

Eric Liss  
(no address)

My character, a third-edition RUNEQUEST® game sorcerer, read the article "Resourceful Sorcery" in issue #132. He'd like to ask the author the question, "Hey! How long have you been using sorcerer PCs?"

Admittedly, the article was enlightening, especially to new PCs unused to the Arts Arcane, but I'd like to cover some sore points. Over here, a boy isn't a man until he's been down to the pub on his eighteenth birthday and quaffed a pint of ale with the lads. Similarly, an Apprentice isn't, *can't be*, an Adept until he's done some task that proves his ability to become an Adept. The ability to make a familiar, or mandala (for honourable players of the supplement *Land of Ninja*), is test enough for any

(continued on page 45)





# Urban Adventures

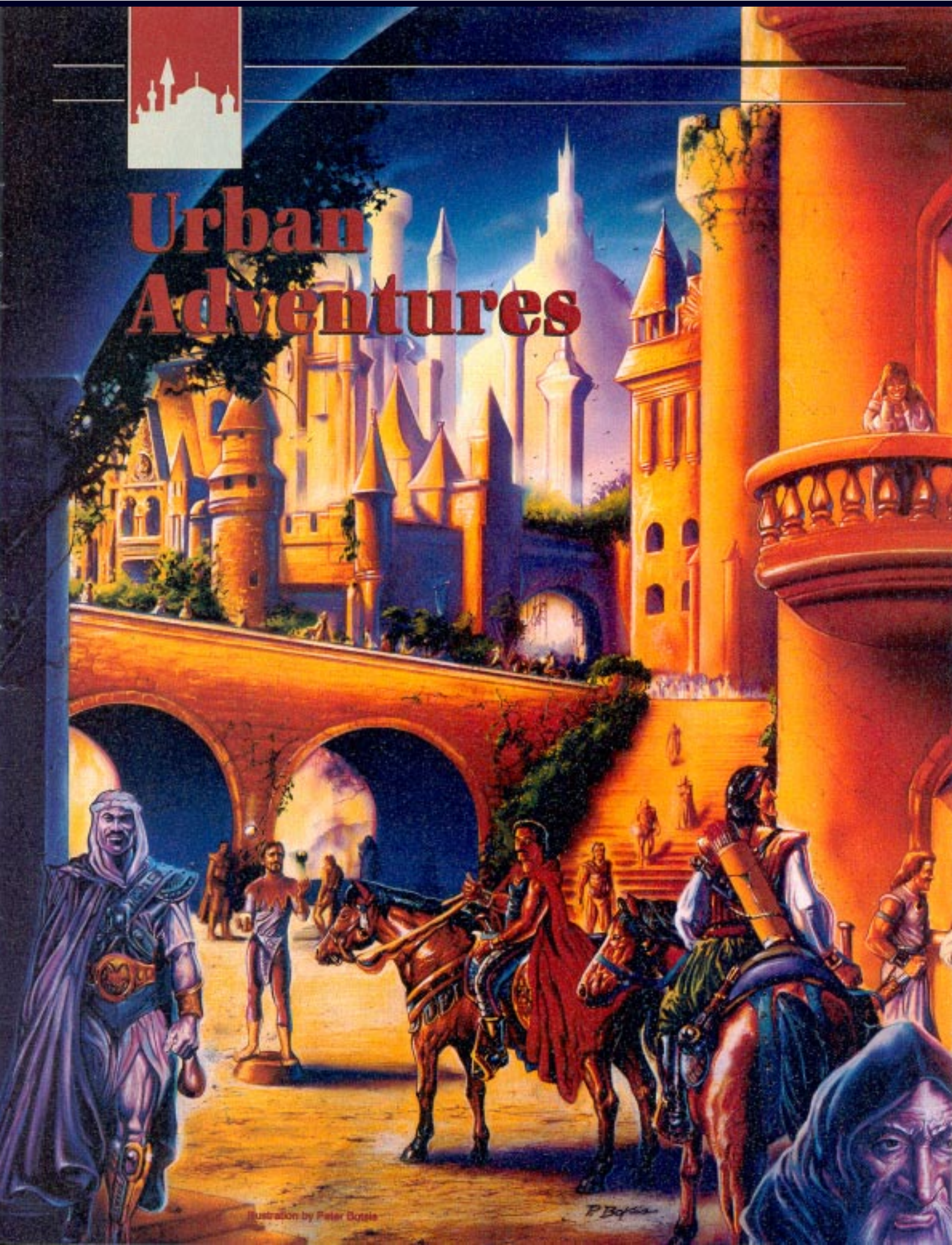


Illustration by Peter Bofis

P. Bofis





by Thomas Kane

# Building Blocks, City Style

## *A city-generation system for fantasy campaigns*

*Shamra remembered deep mines. She remembered the dungeons of dark elves and the mazes of minotaurs, but none of those places had been as bewildering as this huge, uncaring city. Somewhere, she had to find the Blue Wizard Inn to join her party, but she had searched all day, and dark was coming. The street was like a tunnel, with rooftops leaning against one another overhead and patches of light shining between eaves. When night came, marauders would emerge, easily evading the city watches, robbing, kidnapping, and killing. She had to find directions or at least a sanctuary, a base camp from which to explore the city. Finally desperately, without looking to see where she was, Shanra climbed a staircase and knocked on a dry wooden door. Somebody would be inside....*

No DM can plan encounters for every single part of a town. This problem is compounded by the fact that PCs seldom need so much information as when they enter a city and wonder what all the buildings are for. Worse yet, PCs often visit a town on a whim — perhaps because they want to trade with some rare sort of merchant, forcing the DM to decide if the businessman even exists.

One solution to this problem is a random city generation system, and that is what this article provides. These tables show what buildings PCs may find in urban areas of all sizes and what customs might be expected, in both Occidental and Oriental campaigns.

The buildings tables (Tables 2-5) can be

used in several ways. Each attributes a modified die roll to a building type, so that an otherwise undefined building can be given a purpose. ("Looks like you've found a livery stable, Brak.") Each also has a column that determines the chance that the building exists somewhere in or near a city. ("The peasant says there's a livery stable around here!") Always override this second column when it conflicts with other data; if the DM wants a building to exist in a city, it exists. Furthermore, if a roll on the first column indicates that the PCs find a certain building, it is there, no matter what the second column says.

Note that 1d100 results above 100 are given in the first two columns of Tables 2-5. These figures are 1d100 rolls modified by figures from Table 1 (hence the possibility of "rolling" a number larger than 100). The Table 1 modifiers are used to reflect the size of a given city. Each such modifier is added to the 1d100 roll for the first column and to the percentage chance for a building's existence on the second. Thus, the larger the city, the easier it becomes to find unusual businesses.

### **Structures and professions**

Although many of the entries listed in the city-generation tables are self explanatory, others require a bit more definition. The following notes describe structures and professions listed in these tables. For further details on these structures, DMs may consult the books listed in the bibliography of this article.

*Artisan:* Roll this result on Table 6. Most tradesmen live in their workshops. These house/factories have large windows (without glass) that let people on the street watch the craftsmen at work, serving as a sort of advertisement. A large wooden panel is used to shut each portal at night, being used as a drop-down table to display wares during the day.





**Table 1**  
City-Size Modifiers

Town type	Population	Modifier
Hamlet	1-500	—
Village	501-1,000	+10
Town	1,001-3,000	+15
City	3,001-10,000	+20
Large city	10,001 and up	+25

**Bridge:** Bridges span canals, rivers, chasms, or aqueducts, and can be found in even the driest cities. Passers-by must pay a toll at many city bridges; any attempt to avoid this toll (by swimming or other means) is a serious crime. Offenders will have to pay costly fines and may be whipped or imprisoned if they have no money. Cities need their revenue, after all.

**Guild hall:** Roll on Table 6 to see which guild owns this building.

**Castle:** This is the fortified home of a great noble, possibly the ruler of the city. If the city is not ruled by a lord, castles usually belong to priesthoods or knightly orders.

**City wall:** Most cities stretch far beyond their walls. City fortifications usually surround as small an area as possible because the people who build them want only to protect their own property without wasting money on bigger walls. Therefore, characters may find streets blocked by the defenses. The urban area outside a city's wall is called the *faubourg*, an old French word for suburb, and is usually poorer than inner city districts.

**Court of law:** District magistrates administer these courts, commanding bands of constables. Their functions are described on page 140 of *Oriental Adventures*.

**Embassy:** Embassies in Oriental worlds are not intended for diplomacy but as hotels where foreigners are quarantined to keep them from infecting the local

**Table 2**  
Buildings in an Inland City

Mod. 1d100 roll	Chance building exists	Building
01-42	100%	Hut
43-45	30%	Beekeeper's hives
46	20%	Herbwife's shop
47	20%	Quarry
48	30%	Lumber mill
49	10%	Mine
50	10%	Smelter
51-60	70%	Inn
61-65	70%	Burgher's home
66-70	70%	Temple
71-75	70%	Tenement
76-77	30%	Monastery
78	60%	Storehouse
79	50%	Bridge
80-81	70%	Market
82	40%	Livery stable
83	15% *	Castle
84-95		Artisan's shop
96-101	50%	Shanty
102	30%	Falconer's aviary
103-104	30%	Villa
105-106	30%	Tinker's shop
107	40%	Thieves' den
108-109	30%	Fortification
110-111	30%	Bordello
112	20%	College
113-114	50%	City wall
115-116	50%	Guild hall
117-118	30%	Hospital
119-120	40%	Moneylender's shop
121	20%	Alchemist's shop
122	20%	Magic shop
123	20%	Theater
124	20%	Park
125	50%	Tomb

\* See Table 6.

**Table 3**  
Buildings in a Port City

Mod. 1d100 roll	Chance building exists	Building
01-20	100%	Hut
21	15%	Herbwife's shop
22-27	50%	Bait shop
28-32	100%	Dock
33-36	40%	Lumber mill
37-40	70%	Shipwright
41-45	70%	Fishmonger
46-58	70%	Inn
59-62	60%	Burgher's home
63-67	70%	Temple
68-72	60%	Tenement
73	60%	Storehouse
74-76	60%	Bridge
77-87	100%	Market
88	30%	Livery stable
89	10% *	Castle
90-98		Artisan's shop
99-100	50%	Shanty
101-103	30%	Villa
104	30%	Tinker's shop
105-108	40%	Thieves' den
109	30%	Fortification
110-114	70%	Bordello
115	20%	College
116	50%	City wall
117-118	50%	Guild hall
119	30%	Hospital
120	50%	Moneylender's shop
121	20%	Alchemist's shop
122	20%	Magic shop
123	20%	Theater
124	20%	Park
125	50%	Tomb

\* See Table 6.



**Table 4**  
**Buildings in an Oriental City**

Mod. ldl00 roll	Chance building exists	Building
01-10	70%	Small shrine
11-15	20%	Herbalist
16-17	20%	Mine
18-19	20%	Smelter
20-36	70%	Minka *
37-38	10%	Lumber mill
39-43	80%	Market
44-53	80%	Temple
54-55	50%	Rice paddy
56-60	70%	Inn
61	30%	Fortress
62-64	40%	Merchant's home
65-67	60%	Restaurant
68-70	50%	Monastery
71	50%	Bridge
72-80	70%	Bathhouse
81-90	**	Artisan's shop
91	30%	Court of law
92-93	40%	Storehouse
94-97	50%	Training hall
98	60%	Nobleman's castle
99-100	50%	Theater
101-110	60%	Thieves' den
111-112	40%	Tattoo shop
113	20%	Embassy
114-115	40%	Laquerware shop
116-117	40%	Moneylender
118-119	60%	Geisha house
120-125	50%	Tomb

\* See *Oriental Adventures*, page 142

\*\* See Table 6.

peasants with barbaric ideas.

**Fortification:** This indicates some sort of barracks or tower, manned with city guards and controlled by the city council.

**Hospital:** Charities operate most hospitals and treat anyone entrusted to them. They have few trained physicians or clerics, but they do provide a safe place for sick or injured people from any social class. A few hospitals (20%) cater to lepers, and 5% are mental institutions.

**Table 5**  
**Buildings in an Oriental Port City**

Mod. ldl00 roll	Chance building exists	Building
01-05	70%	Small shrine
06	10%	Herbalist
07	10%	Mine
08	10%	Smelter
09-29	70%	Minka *
30-33	40%	Lumber mill
34-36	100%	Dock
37-38	80%	Shipwright
39-40	70%	Bait shop
41-50	80%	Market
51-53	80%	Temple
54	40%	Rice paddy
55-65	70%	Fishmonger
66-70	70%	Inn
71	30%	Fortress
72	60%	Bridge
73-74	40%	Merchant's home
75-76	60%	Restaurant
77-79	50%	Monastery
80-85	70%	Bathhouse
86-96	**	Artisan's shop
97	30%	Court of law
98-99	40%	Storehouse
100-101	50%	Training hall
102	60%	Nobleman's castle
103-104	50%	Theater
105-110	70%	Thieves' den
111-115	60%	Tattoo shop
116-118	20%	Embassy
119-120	40%	Laquerware shop
121-122	40%	Moneylender
123-124	60%	Geisha house
125	50%	Tomb

\* See *Oriental Adventures*, page 143.

\*\* See Table 6.

**Hut:** Huts usually belong to peasant farmers. In large cities, laborers and poor craftsmen live here.

**Magic shop:** This store sells material spell components (see "Living in a Material World" by Michael Dobson, in *DRAGON*® issue #81, reprinted in the Best of

**Table 6**  
**Artisan Subtable**

ldl00 roll	Chance building exists	Craftsman
01	30%	Armorer
02-04	60%	Barber
05-07	60%	Baker
08	30%	Bowyer
09-10	40%	Brewer
11-12	40%	Candlemaker
13-14	60%	Carpenter
15-16	40%	Chandler (general merchant)
17-18	60%	Chicken butcher
19-20	50%	Cooper
21-22	40%	Cutler
23-24	30%	Doctor
25	30%	Fletcher
26-27	60%	Fuller
28-29	30%	Furrier
30-31	30%	Glassblower
32-33	40%	Glovemaker
34	30%	Goldsmith
35-36	60%	Harnessmaker
37-38	40%	Hatmaker
39-41	50%	Hay merchant
42-43	30%	Jeweler
44-45	40%	Laundry
46-48	40%	Masons
49-50	60%	Meat butcher
51-53	50%	Mercer of wool
54-55	40%	Oil merchant
56-58	40%	Old-clothes dealer
59-60	50%	Painter
61-62	40%	Perfumer
63-64	50%	Plasterer
65-67	60%	Potter
68-69	30%	Pursemaker
70-71	60%	Roofer
72-73	50%	Ropemaker
74-75	40%	Rugmaker
76-77	60%	Saddler
78	30%	Scabbardmaker
79-80	50%	Scribe
81-82	40%	Sculptor
83-86	60%	Shoemaker
87-90	60%	Smith
91-92	30%	Spice merchant
93-95	60%	Tailor
96	60%	Tannery
97	60%	Weaver
98	60%	Winer
99	60%	Woodcarver
00	60%	Woodseller

*DRAGON* Magazine Anthology, Volume IV). Magical items are almost never for sale, but the shop might buy them from PCs for roughly half the normal sale value.

**Market:** PCs can buy almost anything from hawkers here. Almost all of the people in a market (80%) are peasants trying to sell farm produce, but 10% of the street vendors are merchants from distant lands; another 10% are artisans rolled from Table 6.

**Rice paddy:** Oriental peasants farm rice everywhere, even in the centers of huge cities. In the real Orient, rice growers still

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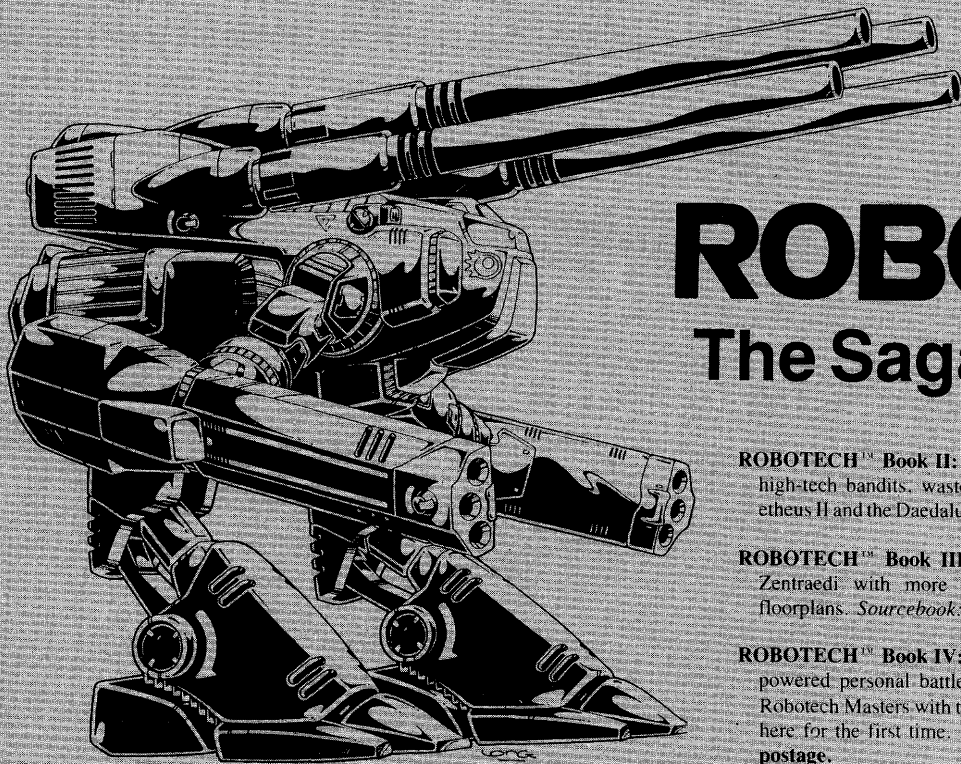
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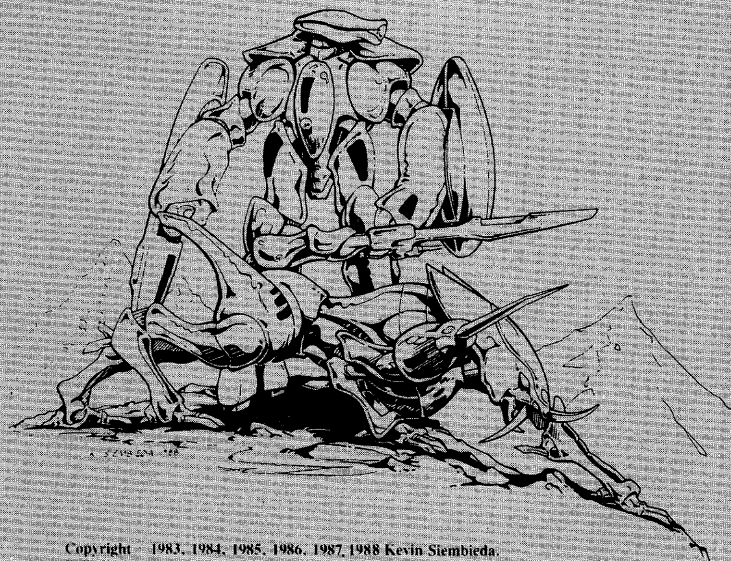
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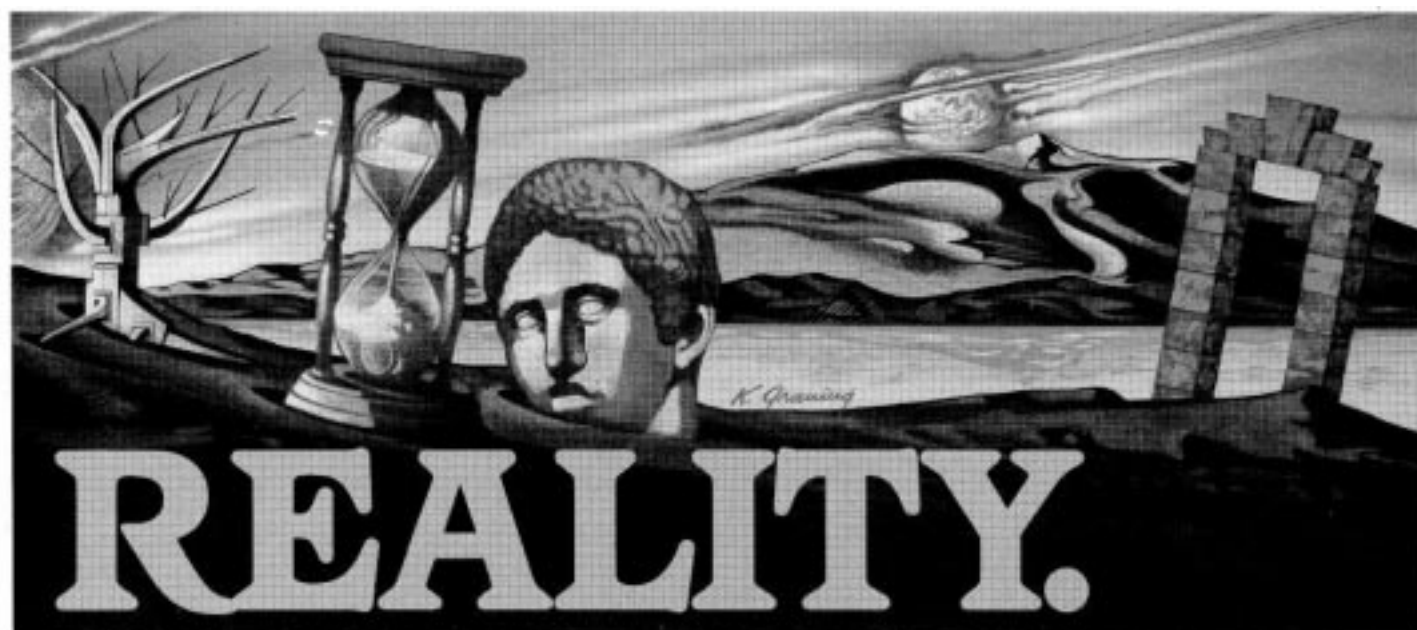
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work in modern Tokyo despite its staggering population.

**Shanty:** These shacks have been illegally built by squatters. Many belong to serfs who are fleeing servitude on some rural manor.

**Storehouse:** Most cities store a supply of food to be rationed out during famines or sieges. Although storehouses do not usually have permanent guards, characters caught robbing these granaries will be severely punished.

**Tattoo shop:** Almost all tattoo shops are operated by yakuza.

**Thieves' den:** This sort of building is always disguised as something else. Roll again to see what it looks like. These dens have a 30% chance of belonging to assassins' guilds or other secret societies. In the Orient, thieves' dens serve as meeting grounds for the yakuza.

**Training hall:** This is the dojo of a famous teacher. The master has a 20% chance of teaching martial arts and a 40% chance of teaching philosophy; the hall has a 80% chance of involving martial arts, a 20% chance of teaching some court proficiency, and a 20% chance of teaching an artisan proficiency (roll each chance separately). The DM may choose exactly which martial art or proficiency is taught here according to the needs of the campaign.

Some of these professions are extremely

specialized. In most cities, guilds force all businessmen to specialize and prohibit them from practicing each others' trades. Guilds also set prices and standards of quality. Merchants control most cities, so these guilds are extremely powerful and seldom defied.

DMs should never use random rolls as a substitute for writing exciting adventures. However, a dice-generated city would be quite realistic in most fantasy worlds. Ancient cities laid their streets wherever there were gaps between buildings and had no definable slums or rich neighborhoods. A merchant's villa might stand next to the town's rowdiest bar or a stinking tenement. Artisans often clustered along a single street, and mighty kings sometimes had cities built to order. But in general, medieval cities were designed randomly.

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by Dan Howard

# The Long Arm of the Law

## *Law enforcement in the AD&D® game urban setting*

DRAGON® issue #155 printed many thief-oriented articles which dealt with that class's functions in urban settings. In several of these articles, the focus was on the operation of a thieves' guild and the power that it wields in the average campaign city. Unfortunately, next to nothing has been written about this guild's nemesis and counterbalance: the law.

With the advent of the law-enforcement material presented herein, the scales of power will finally be reset. With this in mind, DMs should advise their players to remember one thing: "If you want to dance, you have to pay the piper."

### **The DM's role**

First of all, the DM is required to do a small amount of preparation. Due to the varying types of governments, not every nation in a given campaign world will have the same laws or use the same methods to enforce their laws as its kindred nations. For this reason, the DM must determine the general alignment slant of each of the countries in his world.

To determine the alignment of a nation, the DM must examine its history, the general alignment of its people, its political stability, and its wealth. Detailed below are notes on how these factors relate to the four elements of law, chaos, good, and evil.

**Law:** A lawful society is characterized as having a history of steady advancement, obedient and relatively satisfied citizens, a competent ruler or government, and a stable economy.

**Chaos:** A chaotic nation is characterized

as having a turbulent or bloody history, decadent or self-serving people, an incompetent or indifferent ruler, a frequently changing head of state, and a depressed or fluctuating economy.

**Good:** A good-aligned society is characterized as having a history of friendly cooperation in all governmental aspects, honest and fair people, and a benign and conscientious ruler.

**Evil:** An evil-oriented nation is characterized as having a history of aggression, exploitive and brutal citizens who prey on the weaker members of society, and a strong and domineering leader.

Upon determining the general alignment that best fits a country, the DM should make a permanent note of it. If the DM deems it necessary, he may start fleshing out the law procedures of the country in question at this point, using the guidelines presented in the rest of this article.

### **Catching the criminal**

The procedure for capturing a law-breaker varies only slightly from city to city. These differences are most noticeable in the varying procedures and discipline of the law enforcers.

In most campaign cities, the law enforcers are a hierarchy of government soldiers, often called the "watch" (derived from the Middle English term, *wacchen*, meaning to stay awake to keep guard). Each watchman is hired, paid, equipped, and trained by the city. These soldiers regularly patrol the city and man the city's watch posts, which are used to house both prisoners and the watchmen. The follow-

ing is an example of a watch patrol:

Patrol leader (1): AC 4; MV 9"; F3; hp 13; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LN; chain mail, shield, long sword.

Patrol magic-user (1): AC 10; MV 12"; MU 2; hp 5; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LG; dagger; spells: *charm person*, *sleep*.

Patrol watchmen (6): AC 5; MV 9"; F1; hp 8, 7 (x 2), 6, 4 (x 2); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LG-LN; chain mail, halberd or long sword, dagger, manacles.

Manacles are medieval versions of manacles, made out of iron. They are usually locked on the wrists of all criminal suspects. In most campaigns, manacles reduce the victim's dexterity by 4, and all attackers gain a +2 bonus to hit the victim. At the DM's option, manacles can be broken by a successful *bend bars/lift gates* roll (one chance only).

The procedure of the watch can be reduced to a simple, four-step list:

1. A watch patrol is sent to the scene of a reported crime or discovers the crime while patrolling;
2. The patrol restores order;
3. The suspects are arrested and manacled; and,
4. The suspects are marched to a nearby watch post and processed.

In step one, the watch is alerted to a disturbance in the city. The watch can be called in several ways: the cry of a concerned citizen, the sight of a wrongful act, a special gong being rung, etc. A watch patrol is then sent from the nearest watch post to investigate, or hurries to the scene if already on patrol.

In step two, the patrol leader uses his discretion to determine the best course of action. This could be waiting for reinforcements, entering the crime scene, or any number of other possibilities. If the patrol enters the crime scene, order will be restored by either pummeling (if the opponents are unarmed) or fighting with weapons (if the opponents are armed). The patrol continues fighting until the opponents surrender, the opponents are killed, or the patrol withdraws (to return with reinforcements later).

In step three, the patrol manacles all suspects and prepares to march them to the nearest watch post. Each suspect is surrounded on all sides to prevent any escape.

In step four, the patrol marches the suspects to the watch post. Once there, each suspect is identified and the charges are drafted. Following this processing, the suspect is marched (under guard) to the city's main prison and kept in a large, common holding cell to await trial.

This procedure is, of course, only a model. Every city is unique, hence every city has its own methods for apprehending



lawbreakers. These methods are usually determined by the alignment slant of the country, but some methods of enforcement may be determined by the ruler of the city. The DM should evaluate the influence of the city's ruler, based on his alignment, then determine the city's alignment standing and consider its law-chaos aspect, which will affect legal procedures as noted below.

*Law:* In the average lawful society, the city is strict in hunting down criminals. It also has a watch that is well equipped and finely disciplined. The hierarchy of the watch officials is clearly defined and adhered to. Finally, the city has written procedures regarding the duties, the patrols, and most other areas of concern of the watch.

*Chaos:* In a chaotic city, methods of law enforcement are more vague and disorganized. Many criminals are freed at the time of their arrests or before their trials (if they know someone in the watch hierarchy). Additionally, the watch officers may be lazy or incompetent, often wasting time and resources. In some cases, it is doubtful that the watch exists at all; instead the city relies on vigilante justice to punish criminals, which may prove as effective a deterrent as a watch.

#### Awaiting trial

As noted earlier, the newly captured suspect is placed in a holding cell with other suspects awaiting trial. The time the suspect waits depends on the severity of the crime. For minor crimes, the waiting period is 1-3 hours, and the suspect simply waits. For major crimes, the waiting period is 1-6 days. These time periods are, of course, ideal; delays can and do occur.

Suspects awaiting trial for major crimes have two options. First, the suspect can hire a barrister (lawyer) to defend him in court. The suspect can either bribe the cell guard to summon a barrister or have one of his friends hire one for him. Since the suspect is not allowed to have visitors with the exception of a barrister or city official, the latter option should be arranged in advance. If the suspect belongs to a guild, the guild may hire a barrister for him.

Second, the suspect can request a meeting with a city official. The official can be anyone up to the Lord Mayor or down to a lowly watchman. However, the granting of the meeting is left to the official who is summoned. This meeting (if granted) is sometimes used to bribe the official, although its official purpose is to allow confessions, discuss the charges, and clear up any other pretrial necessities. In all cases, after waiting the allotted time, the prisoner is moved under guard to the courtroom for his trial.

**Table 1**  
**Modifiers for Court Decisions**

Situation	Modifier
Case endangers judge's job if defendant loses	+10*
Has higher-paid barrister	+ 6
Has wealth and influence	+ 4
Has more witnesses than opposition	+ 3
Has lower-paid barrister	+ 3
Has physical evidence	+ 2
Has no barrister	- 2
Has no witnesses	- 2

\* To government's side.

**Table 2**  
**Sentences for Felonies**

Crime	Typical sentence	Typical fine <sup>1</sup>
Assassination	Public execution	Forfeit assets
Murder	Death	Forfeit assets
Kidnapping	Death	Forfeit assets
Assault <sup>2</sup>	Life slavery <sup>3</sup>	Forfeit assets
Theft <sup>4</sup>	Life slavery <sup>3</sup>	Forfeit 50% assets
Extortion	Beating	Forfeit 10% assets
Debt <sup>5</sup>	Indentured servitude <sup>6</sup>	—
Smuggling	90 days in jail	50-300 gp
Swindling	60 days in jail	50-300 gp
Fencing stolen goods	30 days in jail	50-100 gp
Forgery	30 days in jail	20-80 gp

<sup>1</sup> The criminals family must pay the fine or lose all family assets and be charged with debt.

<sup>2</sup> This is an attack with a lethal weapon.

<sup>3</sup> The criminal is owned for life by the city. If slavery is legal, the criminal may be sold to a private citizen; the money earned goes into the city treasury.

<sup>4</sup> This is the theft of items worth 100 gp or more.

<sup>5</sup> At the DM's option, an accompanying fine must be paid off during the indentured servitude.

<sup>6</sup> Indentured servants are indentured to the owner of the debt, working for an amount of time sufficient to pay off the amount owed. The debtor is essentially a slave who earns 1 cp per day.

**Table 3**  
**Sentences for Petty Crimes**

Crime	Typical sentence	Fine <sup>1</sup>
Evasion of justice	30 days in jail	Any reward offered
Insolence <sup>2</sup>	Flogging <sup>3</sup>	Any reward offered
Petty theft <sup>4</sup>	20 days in jail	Any reward offered
Brawling <sup>5</sup>	1-12 days in jail	Any reward offered

<sup>1</sup> The criminals family must pay the fine or lose all family assets and be charged with debt.

<sup>2</sup> If the city has nobles, insulting them is the crime of insolence. Insolence can also be used as a contempt of court charge.

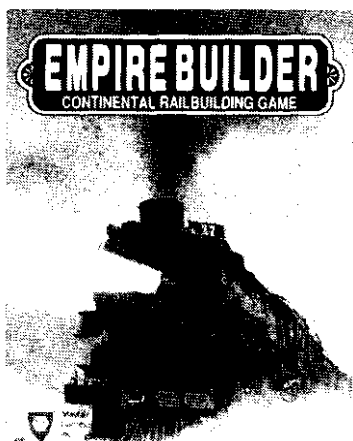
<sup>3</sup> Flogging reduces both strength and constitution by three points for one day.

<sup>4</sup> This is the theft of items worth less than 100 gp.

<sup>5</sup> This is involvement in a brawl, not just starting one.

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## The trial

In most campaign cities, both the criminal and his accuser are allowed to hire a barrister to represent them in the courtroom. Barristers in the AD&D® game, however, function differently from the attorneys-at-law of the modern age. In order to explain how a barrister wins a case, certain aspects of the profession must be assumed and understood.

To begin with, every major city sports a barristers' guild. Since barristers are taken from the middle class, the guild retains more city-wide influence than, say, the lower-class farmers' guild. With this influence, the guild often gets laws passed that establish it as the only source of public defenders. When ineptitude is a serious problem in a barristers' guild, the guild usually bribes some of the city's judges to favor its members and buys exclusive access to the written laws for its members. In return, the members surrender roughly half their fees to the guild. Since the average man who defends himself thus does not know what the laws are, he almost always loses the case to the professional barrister. In this way, a corrupt barrister regularly earns his fee of 100-800 gp by defending wealthy clients.

At the time of the trial, the criminal's barrister (if he has one) arrives at the holding cell with his evidence and witnesses. From here, the prisoner is escorted under guard to the courtroom, where a judge presides over the case and renders a verdict. The trial processes described below are basically neutral on a good-evil scale. Logical adjustments should be made for cities leaning toward either good or evil. For example: One is innocent until proven guilty in good cities; the opposite is true in evil cities. Further differences based on alignment are given after the procedural section.

For a petty crime, the criminal is tried in petty court. Petty courts have a heavy caseload; consequently, they try cases in a rapid-fire manner whenever possible. The criminal is led into the courtroom, and the charges are read. Next, the criminal is given a chance to justify his actions. If he cannot, he is usually pronounced guilty and sentenced accordingly.

For a felony crime, the criminal is tried in a felony court. Here, the criminal is brought in and the charges against him are read. The prosecutor, usually called the Mayor's Counsel, presents the case against the suspect. Next, the suspect or his barrister presents the case for the defense. After each side has been heard, the judge determines the verdict.

To determine the verdict in a felony case, the DM should choose the winning side if the verdict is obvious. If it is not, the following system can be used (adapted from the LANKHMAR™: City of Adventure supplement, page 78). If the verdict is questionable, roll 2d6 for each side and add the modifiers shown on Table 1. Modifiers are cumulative in cases in which

more than one apply. The side with the highest number wins. In the event of a tie, the government wins. If the suspect is found innocent, he is free to leave. If he is found guilty, he is sentenced by the judge.

To determine the sentence or fine, the DM should consult Tables 2 and 3. The sentence must be served immediately, but the fine can be paid at any time within the next month. The criminal is removed from the court and taken to a prisoner's cell block. Later, his family, is notified and the fine is collected from them. If the prisoner has no family, the fine is taken out of his belongings. If he cannot afford the fine, he may be charged with debt.

When determining how a city's general alignment affects the trial, the DM should only consider the good-evil component of the city, as per the appropriate paragraph:

**Good:** In the average good society, the judge is intent on finding the truth and administering justice. The court may hire barristers for the poor or allow every defendant access to the city's archives. Also, the government may pass civil-rights legislation that ensures a fair trial. Corruption and brutality during arrest are investigated by a special government section.

**Evil:** In an evil society, the trial process attempts to forcefully suppress the criminal element. The government may outlaw barristers, leaving the defendant to defend himself. Punishment may be brutal. The ruler may destroy his enemies through the law, but all allies (such as his judges, vassals, etc.) are above prosecution.

## Pronouncing judgment

One final subject must be covered: pronouncing judgment on the defendant. The sentence of a guilty PC criminal must be short yet effective. Tables 2 and 3 reflect this in their design, as most of the sentences can be carried out within three months. By using this system, the rest of the players have to play for less than three game months before they can be reunited with their companion.

In the meantime, while the criminal waits in prison, the party may embark on a few adventures, gaining some treasure and magic. The deprivation of this money and magic is painful for the criminal, but it does not alienate him from the campaign. The jailed PC's player may run another character during this time.

For those PC criminals sentenced to death or life slavery, the DM should allow a chance or two for escape. The city may offer to suspend the sentence if the criminal performs a community service. Alternately, cell doors and shackles can be weak from rust and rot. In fact, the criminal's companions may solve the DM's problem by planning to rescue their comrade.

Thus, with the law as a more potent threat, the PC criminal element is held in check. Even in the AD&D game, evil PCs cannot run the world.



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# Taking Care of Business

## *Merchants: An NPC class with cash*

Gideon, a fighter of some renown, has just polished off a troll and is now ready to collect his winnings. He searches through the creature's lair and finds three topazes worth 500 gp each, a fur worth 800 gp, and a piece of jewelry worth stop! Whoa! How does this fighter, who has difficulty counting when his gauntlets are on, know what a topaz is or what it's worth? The ability to identify and appraise valuable goods should be left to someone who is properly trained for this duty: that overlooked and underrated character, the merchant.

The merchant class is an integral part of any AD&D® game society. Merchants are certainly the most commonly encountered NPCs, ranging from clerks in small general stores to merchant princes heading caravans along new trade routes. Merchants are found in all sectors of any civilized area, serving as fences for the thieves' guild in the lower-class part of town, as gem dealers who attend the queen, and as wool merchants who supply the tailors in the business district. These individuals form one of the most powerful groups in any realm. They control the money, and when money talks, many ears listen.

Merchants cannot be multiclassed, although many merchants are ex-adventurers who have quit their previous professions after collecting sufficient funds to go into business for themselves. Adventurers who change from their profession to that of the merchant class cannot use any of their former abilities until their merchant level exceeds their previous class level, or they lose all experience recently gathered. As a general rule, the merchant should be used mostly as an

NPC class, although DMs may use the class as a PC class as they see fit. Some alterations in these rules may be necessary in this latter instance; these alterations are left to the DM's discretion.

Table 1 shows what classes of NPC merchants are generally encountered. If a character class is indicated for an incompatible race (i.e., a half-elf illusionist), reroll the result. If the merchant in question is an ex-adventurer, and if the character was capable of being multiclassed in his adventuring days, roll again on this table to determine if he was multiclassed. For example, a half-elf rolls a 56, indicating he was a fighter. He rolls again and gets a 93, indicating he was a fighter/thief. If he had rolled again in the fighter class or as having no previous class, he would simply be a fighter. A third roll of 73 would make him a fighter/thief/magic-user. A maximum of three rolls is allowed, as this is the limit for multiclassed PCs.

Merchants are generally either half-elfen or human, though DMs may wish to include merchant NPCs of other races as part of a demi-human community. Certain racial limitations and restrictions will apply; these may be gleaned from the *Players Handbook* or *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

Merchant characters use six-sided dice for hit dice, as per Table 2. With regard to human and half-elfen merchants, the following minimum ability scores apply; DMs may alter these figures as they deem necessary for other demi-human races:

Strength: 6  
Intelligence: 10  
Wisdom: 10  
Dexterity: 6

Constitution: 6  
Charisma: 10  
Comeliness: 10

Merchants are allowed to wear leather armor; they may not use a shield. Merchants are allowed the use of the following weapons: club, dagger, dart, scimitar, broad sword, long sword, short sword, and whip. Merchants may use oil, but only evil merchants may use poison.

With respect to weapon proficiencies, merchants receive two initial weapons and are assessed a -4 nonproficiency penalty. Merchant characters add one proficiency level for every four levels gained.

In addition to these abilities, merchants have the power to *read languages* and *find/remove traps* as a thief of the same level. Merchants fight and make saving throws on the thief tables, unless they are ex-adventurers, in which case they may use the most advantageous tables as allowed by the dual-class rules.

While merchants receive standard experience points for monsters and magic, they are awarded a 10% bonus on experience points gained from money. Merchants do not receive any experience points for money they acquired prior to becoming a merchant. Therefore, a fighter with 2,000 gp does not start his career as a merchant with 2,000 xp. There is, however, no restriction against using this money for investments with which he can earn both profits and experience points.

Merchants may be any of the lawful or neutral alignments. The frequency of these alignments are as follows: lawful good (15%), lawful neutral (35%), lawful evil (10%), neutral good (15%), neutral (20%), and neutral evil (5%). Chaos is simply not conducive to good business.

### **Magical item and spell use**

Merchants can use all magical items usable by thieves, plus any magical items allowed them in their previous class if they are ex-adventurers. Because they so often handle and evaluate magical items (and require added protective abilities that magic can grant), merchants can also purchase spells that they can cast (as described further on) from the merchants guild at 1,000 gp per spell level; cantrips cost 100 gp each. The guild is protective of these spells and will not sell them to anyone other than a guild member. Merchants can also receive spells from scrolls and cooperative magic-users, and keep their own spell books. Merchants acquire a *read magic* spell first, and almost always (90%) acquire a *detect magic* spell next (useful because they will not purchase any item with a magical aura unless they know what the item's properties are). Merchants cast spells at half their merchant level (rounded down) for effect.



**Table 1**  
**Merchant Type Encountered**

1d100	Merchant
01-50	No previous class
51-65	Ex-fighter
66-70	Ex-ranger
71-85	Ex-magic-user
86-87	Ex-illusionist
88-00	Ex-thief

Tables 3 and 4 illustrate spell-use statistics for the merchant class. Table 3 indicates the number of spells usable by level. Table 4 shows which spells may actually be chosen by the merchant, as well as providing randomization tables for choosing which spells an NPC merchant receives. Note again that the spells *read magic* and *detect magic* should be chosen first before rolling for other spells. A 1d6 roll is used to select which cantrips (normal or reversed) the merchant acquires; a roll of 1-4 indicates a normal cantrip is received (for which a 1d12 roll is made to find the exact cantrip), and a roll of 5-6 indicates a reversed cantrip is acquired (requiring a 1d6 roll). The spells listed in Table 4 are exactly the same as the versions of these spells listed in the *Players Handbook* and *Unearthed Arcana*. All spell powers and restrictions listed in these two sources also apply to the merchant class.

Cantrips are used quite frequently for such tasks as keeping the merchant's wares polished, shined, or fresh. Less scrupulous members of this class may use some of the reversed cantrips to bring down the prices of items they want to purchase.

### Appraising

One of the most important aspects of the merchant class is the ability to determine the value of an object. A merchant will appraise any item for someone else, charging a fee of 1% of the value of the item per level of the merchant. Thus, a 6th-level merchant charges 6% to appraise an item; 10% is the maximum fee. This fee will not be charged if the merchant buys the item at the same time he appraises it.

Single-item merchants (e.g., rug merchants) appraise items in their fields of specialization as if they were four levels higher, but are penalized two levels when appraising an item not in their particular area of expertise. Optionally, thieves can appraise as merchants at one-fifth their thieving level, rounded down; consequently, a 1st- through 4th-level thief cannot appraise, a 5th- through 9th-level thief appraises as a 1st-level merchant, etc.

**Table 2**  
**Merchant Levels and Experience**

Experience points	Level	Six-sided dice for accumulated hit points	Level title
0-1,500	1	1	Haggler
1,501-3,000	2	2	Bargainer
3,001-5,000	3	3	Hawker
5,001-10,000	4	4	Vendor
10,000-20,000	5	5	Entrepreneur
20,001-40,000	6	6	Trader
40,001-75,000	7	7	Master Trader
75,001-135,000	8	8	Merchant
135,001-220,000	9	9	Merchant Prince
220,001-440,000	10	9+1	M.P. (10th level)
440,001-660,000	11	9+2	M.P. (11th level)
660,001-880,000	12	9+3	M.P. (12th level)

220,000 experience points per level for each additional level beyond



Illustration courtesy of Dover Publications, Inc.

**Table 3**  
**Spells Usable by Class and Level**

Merchant level	Spell level		
	C*	1	2
1	—	—	—
2	1	—	—
3	2	—	—
4	3	1	—
5	3	2	—
6	4	3	—
7	4	3	1
8	4	4	2
9	4	4	3
10**	4	4	4

\* Magic-user cantrips.

\*\* Maximum spell ability.

Table 5 illustrates the merchant's ability to appraise goods. To use Table 5, roll 1d100 and compare the result with the merchant's level. The amount indicated is the appraised value of the item. For example, a 4th-level merchant appraising a gem worth 1,000 gp rolls a 92; therefore, he appraises the gem at 125% of its actual value, or at 1,250 gp. Evil (and some neutral) merchants may give a false appraisal if they think they will never see the PCs again, and always do so if they wish to purchase an item for themselves.

Merchants naturally pay less for goods and merchandise, especially when making their purchases from individuals such as PCs. However, their funds are not as endless as most PCs seem to think. Table 6 shows the funds usually available to NPC merchants, though the DM may rule that certain ones are richer or poorer than indicated (especially ex-adventurers). Any merchant who is going to spend a considerable portion of his funds for a purchase verifies his appraisal with a higher-level merchant to avoid making any costly mistakes. Merchants appraise wares for each other for free if they share other trade-offs in business.

A purchase percentage is the percent of the appraised value a merchant will pay for an item. Higher-level merchants pay a smaller percentage because of their increased skills in bargaining.

### Fast-talking

Merchants have the ability to fast-talk to make a deal; treat this as a *suggestion* spell. The victim is entitled to a saving throw on 1d20 against his intelligence, with saving-throw bonuses against will-force attacks for high (or low) wisdoms. This *suggestion* power can be used once per day per level of the merchant. If the victim fails his roll, he believes he got a

**Table 4**  
**Merchant Spells**

Number	Normal cantrips	Number	Normal cantrips	Number	Reversed cantrips
1	Clean	7	Freshen	1	Dirty
2	Color	8	Gather	2	Dusty
3	Dampen	9	Polish	3	Ravel
4	Dry	10	Shine	4	Tangle
5	Dust	11	Stitch	5	Tarnish
6	Flavor	12	Wrap	6	Wilt

Number	1st level	2nd level
1	Alarm	Audible glamor
2	Comprehend languages	Detect evil/good
3	Detect illusions	Detect invisible
4	Detect magic	ESP
5	Friends	Fools gold
6	Hold portal	Knock
7	Identify	Locate object
8	Mending	Magic mouth
9	Message	Preserve
10	Nystul's magic aura	Wizard lock
11	Read magic	—
12	Tensor's floating disk	—

**Table 5**  
**Appraising Ability**

Merchant level	1d100 roll and appraisal percentage								
	01-03	04-08	09-16	16-30	31-70	71-86	86-92	93-97	98-00
1	1-20%	50%	66%	75%	100%	125%	133%	150%	300-1,000%
2	23-40%	50%	66%	75%	100%	125%	133%	150%	200-500%
3	21-40%	66%	75%	90%	100%	100%	125%	133%	200-400%
4	31-50%	75%	90%	90%	100%	100%	125%	133%	200-400%
5	31-50%	75%	90%	100%	100%	100%	125%	133%	200-300%
6	41-60%	75%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	125%	150-250%
7	51-70%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	125%	150-250%
8	61-80%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100-200%
9	71-90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100-200%
10*	81-100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100-150%

\* Maximum appraising ability

good deal for a number of turns equal to 20 minus his wisdom score. Merchants of level 9 and above may, in addition, talk so persuasively that they can cast a mass *suggestion* once per day.

If the victim makes the saving throw, he most likely becomes irate and possibly violent. Therefore, an established businessman or trader working a regular route seldom uses this technique; doing so quickly gains the merchant a bad reputation. If for some reason the merchant is dealing with a monster, use the intelligence table in the *Monster Manual*, page 6, and the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 79, for wisdom notes. The merchant must be able to communicate with the victim to use the fast-talk ability.

### Merchant caravans

The merchant caravan described on page 69 of the *Monster Manual* is a perfect description of how merchants travel. The following additional characters accompany every caravan, replacing the tradesmen given in the *Monster Manual*:

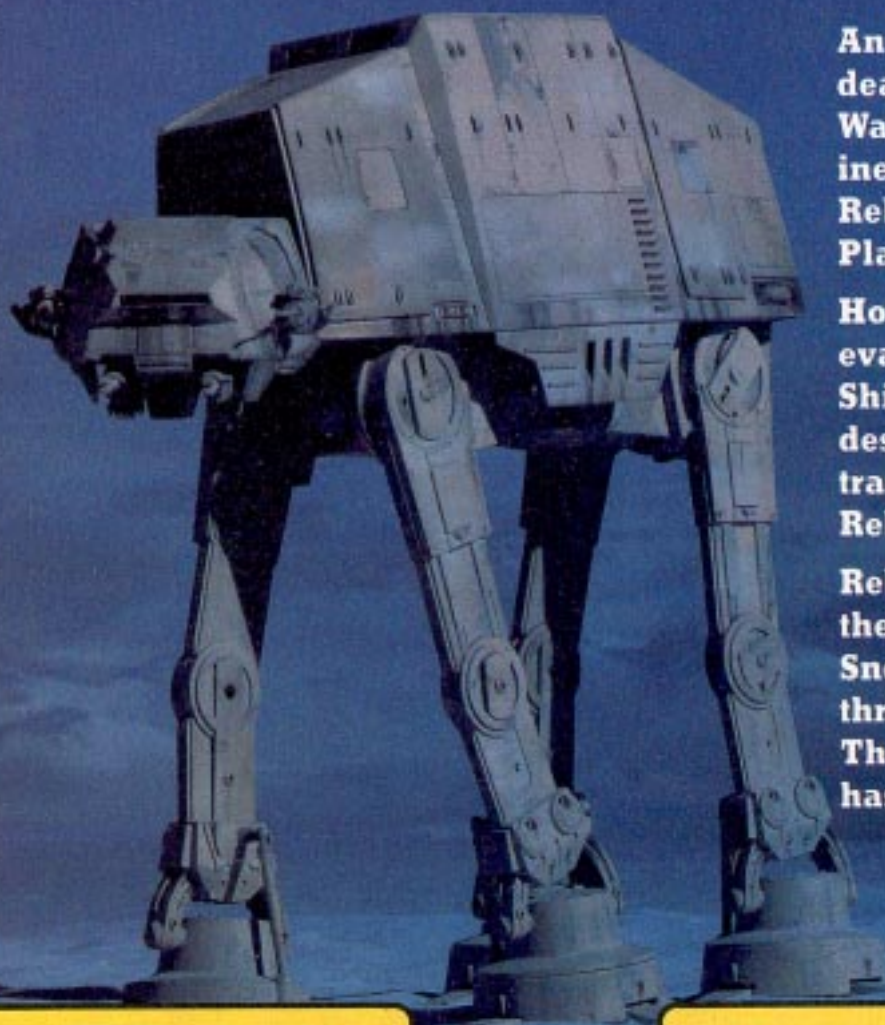
- 1 head merchant of 8th-12th level;
- 1-3 overseer merchants of 5-7th level;
- 1-6 merchants of 2nd level; and,
- 3-18 merchants of 1st level.

The number of people in the caravan is dependent upon the amount of merchandise. There are 50 people for every 10,000 gp worth of goods, up to a maximum of 300 people and 60,000 gp.

If PCs encounter a caravan, the level of the merchant they deal with depends on



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**Table 6**  
**Merchant Purchasing Goods**

Merchant level	Funds (gp)	Purchasing percent
1	200	80
2	500	80
3	750	75
4	1,250	75
5	2,500	70
6	4,000	70
7	7,000	65
8	15,000	65
9	25,000*	60 **

\* Plus 25,000 gp per level after 9th

\*\* Minimum purchasing percent

how much merchandise the PCs plan to buy. If they are going to spend less than 500 gp, they will work with a 1st- or 2nd-level merchant. If they have between 500 and 3,000 gp, they will deal with one of the overseers; anything in excess of 3,000 gp will be handled by the head merchant himself.

#### Merchants in town

Every town, no matter the size, has at least one merchant running a general store; large cities may have hundreds of them working in its shops, stands, and bazaars. Almost all merchants found working in shops are between 1st and 4th level. Except for magic shops and high-

class establishments, merchants of 5th level and above are rarely encountered running a store, as they are usually behind the scenes managing several businesses.

#### Conclusion

Let's go back to Gideon now. Instead of telling him exactly what he has found, a DM should advise him that he has found three large yellow gems, a nice fur, and a silver or platinum necklace containing either clear glass or diamonds. Gideon must now hope he gets an honest merchant and a good appraisal. *[Another system for appraising treasure appeared in DRAGON issue #104, page 38: "Assessing, not guessing," by Lionel D. Smith.]*

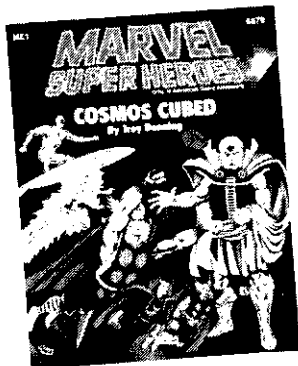
The merchant NPC class can add a whole new dimension to your AD&D game. High-level merchants may send PCs to investigate new trade routes, or to deal with those people or creatures that are interfering with more established routes. A merchant may have a map to treasure and could give it to trustworthy adventurers for half the profit. All in all, the merchant can add color and realism to AD&D game adventures, and the use of this class should make the guy behind the counter able to deal with PCs on more equivocal terms.

Ω

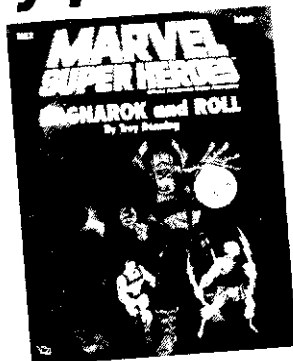
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by Patrick G. Goshtigian and Nick Kopsinis

# A Room for the Knight

## Inns and taverns in fantasy-game cities

In the AD&D® game world, there are always times when traveling adventurers must stop and rest for the night in a city away from home. Inns provide lodging for the adventurers, and taverns provide meals and an opportunity to mingle with the local people.

All inns and taverns differ in their own ways; each always gives adventurers a unique setting. However, the quality of these establishments may range from poor to excellent. This article provides definitions of typical inns and taverns (rated by quality) and suggested fees for their services. This information should not be considered adamant, and the DM is encouraged to expand and modify it as his campaign commands. Judgment should also be used as to the availability of foods in various regions (e.g., seafood is not available in a desert).

Some inns also have lounges and dining facilities. These areas are usually smaller than those of an actual tavern and are a direct part of the inn. The majority of the patrons in these areas are occupants of the inn rather than local people.

One possible way to use this information is to key the inns and taverns shown on large city maps with an initial ("I" for inns and "T" for taverns) and a number of stars appropriate to the establishment's quality. This shorthand system would help spur-of-the-moment traveling in urban areas.

### Inn ratings

#### One-star inns ★

One-star inns are typically located off dirt roads and alleys in the seedier parts of cities and large towns; they are not found in places of smaller population that could not support their poor quality. One-star inns are usually one-story buildings of

light wood construction, with straw used to cover dirt floors. In rainy seasons, most such roofs leak. These inns have 3-6 small rooms that can comfortably accommodate up to two men each, using floor mats for beds and leaving minimal space for their gear. The rooms usually have barred windows or shutters but no curtains or glass. The doors rarely have locks, but it is common for them to have at least a slide or hook latch. Given the dark deeds often planned and done in such rooms, one would wonder at the lack of security — but the dangers of the neighborhood discourage all intruders but the most ruthless.

One-star inns are commonly named after the owner/manager who lives there (e.g., Old Ben's Inn). The owners of these establishments tend to be rude fighter-types or thieves who speak in gruff tones and enjoy picking fights with guests. They demand payment before giving lodging for the night; anyone who can pay is allowed to stay.

These inns never have restaurants or lounges, although they are frequently found near seedy taverns and gambling houses. Fights and drunkenness are prevalent here, and sleeping is uncomfortable due to the constant noise.

#### Two-star inns ★★

Two-star inns are generally found on main roads in poor sections of towns and in most poor villages. These inns can have two stories but usually have but one, with a total of 5-10 sleeping rooms. Each room provides plenty of space for two men and gear; three men would be slightly cramped. The beds are straw mattresses; the doors and windows all have locks. The windows are usually barred and have shutters or curtains but no glass.

These inns have wooden floors. Usually, an all-night bar is built into the building. In general, these inns are of fair quality, but it is the associated bar that brings down the inn's credibility. No meals are served, and many drifters and thieves frequent these places. The storage of the drinks is only fair, so with every drink there is a 1% cumulative chance of contracting some gastrointestinal disease.

The owners of two-star inns are rarely seen, and a manager and a bartender are often the only employees. These two people have good chances of overhearing conversations and are generally excellent sources of rumors and information, although they must usually be bribed.

Two-star inns are generally named after unusual creatures in an attempt to bring some class to the inn (e.g., The Golden Toad Inn). Barroom fights are common nightly events in major cities and can be expected. The rooms in the inn provide fair sleeping quarters, although a low murmur of barroom activity can always be heard.

#### Three-star inns ★★★

Three-star inns are located in wealthy towns and in the moderate to rich sections of cities. These inns are two-story buildings that have sleeping quarters on the upper levels, and storage rooms, employee rooms, a lounge, and a bar on the lower level. These establishments are well-constructed buildings made of wood and stone that have 10-20 rooms for guests and 3-5 employee rooms.

The guest rooms are usually outfitted with three beds of straw and feathers, and plenty of room for the gear of three men. These rooms usually have two windows

Table 1  
Inn Prices

Lodging	Cost by inn rating			
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★
1 night w/meal	—	1 sp	5 sp	15 sp
1 night	1 sp	10 sp	1 gp	5 gp
1 week	6 sp	3 gp	5 gp	33 gp
1 month	1 gp	11 gp	19 gp	130 gp



with shutters, and the doors all have double locks. Some rooms have a table or a desk with some chairs. Employee rooms are of similar quality. For additional fees, guests may purchase storage closets or stables for their horses (most of the inns have stables, but no horse meals or stable keepers are available).

These inns are run by managers who generally have quarters on the lower level. Three-star inn managers are well paid and value their positions. They tend to be relatively polite and generally helpful to travelers.

Three-star inns generally house their lounges on the ground floor; the lounges are usually of good quality. A bartender, barmaid, and cook are in charge of service and maintenance of these areas. On some evenings, local or traveling minstrels entertain in the lounge. Light meals are served twice daily, and both the lounge and bar close down for the late evening and morning hours.

These inns are quality establishments that quietly and efficiently serve their purpose. For this, they are usually named after peaceful natural events (e.g., The Falling Rain Inn) or other appealing features (e.g., The Covered Bridge Inn).

#### Four-star inns

★★★★

Four-star inns are only found in very wealthy sections of large cities. They are often tall and multileveled (2-4 stories) buildings of stone construction, with oak floors and furnishings. Each level has up to a dozen rooms, with each room accommodating up to four men.

The rooms are large and are often furnished with four feather mattresses, one table, several chairs, and a desk. These rooms are painted, and most are decorated with artwork and plants. The doors have single locks, and the windows all have curtains as well as shutters (some



Illustration by Valerie Valusek

have glass).

Four-star inns are associated with restaurants and stables, which are usually under separate ownership and generally offer their services for substantial prices. The inns also offer services such as night guards, storage rooms, armor cleaning, weapon repair, blacksmithing, and the use of a library. The inns are staffed by a head

manager and several cleaning boys who clean rooms and attend to guests' needs. The inns also have staffs of guards for security; these guards also act as bouncers for the drinking areas. Only the wealthy, royalty, and local heroes are given lodging in these inns, as others aren't permitted onto the premises. These inns' names reflect this upper-class orientation (e.g., The King's Arms).

The associated dining halls are usually of the highest quality, featuring nightly entertainment and a full menu. These restaurants are generally not restricted to inn guests, although they do limit entrance to a high standard of patronage.

**Table 2**  
**Inn Service Prices**

Services	Cost by inn rating			
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★
Armor repair	—	—	—	2 gp
Blacksmith	—	—	—	15 sp
Guide	—	—	8 sp	15 sp
Horse grooming	—	—	—	10 sp
Horse meal	—	—	—	1 gp
Laundry	—	3 cp	20 cp	1 sp
Library	—	—	—	2 gp
Messenger	—	—	3 sp	8 sp
Night guard	—	—	—	1 gp
Stable	—	—	18 sp	2 gp
Storage closet	—	—	10 sp	1 gp
Weapon repair	—	—	—	1 gp

#### Explanation of services

This section details the services mentioned in Table 2, Inn Service Prices. Nearly all workers mentioned here are zero-level humans who wear no armor and carry no (or minimal) weaponry.

**Armor repair:** Small dents and nicks in armor can be repaired, and armor can be cleaned and oiled. The charge is per suit. Large repairs are referred to the local armorer.

**Blacksmith:** Most metallic items can be repaired. Any construction is referred



to the local weapon maker. Charges are assessed per item. Horseshoeing is also available at the cost of two items.

**Guide:** This employee of the inn takes patrons to various spots around the city or town. Under no circumstances will the guide leave the city or town, and in some very large cities, the guide will not leave

the area in which the inn is located. Charges are assessed per three hours of guidance.

**Horse grooming:** This service bathes and removes ticks from a horse, and is only offered if stables for the night are purchased.

**Horse meal:** Feed for a horse accompa-

nying one night's stay is provided.

**Laundry:** Overnight cleaning of basic clothing is done; leather is referred to the local leather shop. Charge is per laundry load.

**Library:** This is a small collection of books and scrolls on subjects concerning the locale. There is a 5% chance that a local historian (perhaps a sage) is present. The charge is for three hours of use; the books and scrolls may not be removed from the room.

**Messenger:** This person will carry a written or verbal message to a designated person anywhere within the confines of the city or town (or neighborhood if the city is very large). Charge is per message per person.

**Night guard:** This is a zero-level, lightly armed guard who will watch the patrons' room to insure no unlawful entry occurs. The night guard can also be hired to guard a patron's storage closet. Charge is for one night's work.

**Stable:** This is shelter for one night for a patron's horse.

**Storage closet:** This is a 5'-high, 3'-wide, 2'-deep closet of oak construction with a strong lock. Charge is for one month's storage; materials left after one month are taken or auctioned.

**Weapon repair:** Weapons are sharpened and cleaned. Major repairs are referred to a local weapon maker. The charge is per weapon.

## Tavern ratings

### One-star tavern

A person is taking a large risk by patronizing a tavern of this caliber if he is not a regular patron. These taverns are generally small and are located in the poorer sections of a city. Rarely are they found in small towns, villages, or hamlets where they would be the only tavern.

These buildings are often decrepit, and the insides of the establishments are always dirty. The ventilation is very poor. It would not be uncommon to find dogs scavenging for the scraps that are habitually thrown on the floor. The food and drink are so poor that anyone consuming food has a 2% cumulative chance of contracting food poisoning; any drink gives a 2% cumulative chance of gastrointestinal disease.

Although the food and drink are awful, these taverns are usually packed with people at night. Most of these people, however, are of ill repute; thieves, assassins, and such abound. Foreigners are treated with hostility. Knowledge of the presence of foreigners in such places spreads rapidly through the unlawful side of the community. Drunken brawls are regular occurrences, and not much is done to stop them.

### Two-star tavern

These common taverns are found in most settlements. In a small town or vil-

**Table 3**  
**Tavern Drinks**

Drink	Cost by tavern rating			
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★
Ale <sup>1</sup>	10 cp	1 sp	2 sp	5 sp
Ale, dark <sup>1</sup>	1 sp	2 sp	5 sp	9 sp
Beer <sup>1</sup>	2 cp	5 cp	1 sp	3 sp
Bourbon'	2 sp	7 sp	11 sp	1 gp
Brandy'	—	15 sp	1 gp	3 gp
Grog'	1 sp	2 sp	5 sp	9 sp
Juice, apple	—	—	3 sp	8 sp
Juice, grape	—	1 sp	3 sp	8 sp
Juice, orange	—	2 sp	3 sp	8 sp
Juice, tomato	—	—	3 sp	8 sp
Mead	3 sp	5 sp	8 sp	12 sp
Milk, cow <sup>3</sup>	—	1 cp	4 cp	1 sp
Milk, goat <sup>3</sup>	—	2 cp	5 cp	1 sp
Tea	—	2 sp	5 sp	7 sp
Water, spring	1 cp	2 cp	5 cp	15 cp
Wine, common	2 sp	5 sp	10 sp	15 sp
Wine, fine	—	10 sp	18 sp	2 gp

<sup>1</sup> Prices are per pint mug.

<sup>2</sup> Prices are per shot glass.

<sup>3</sup> Prices may be higher if facilities for getting the milk are not local. Milk could easily be an "upper-class" item.

All other prices are per 12 oz. mug.



# REBELLION

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*Rebellion Sourcebook* is intended for **Traveller** referees and requires the **MegaTraveller** role-playing system. \$10.00.

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lage, a two-star tavern is likely the only tavern. These buildings are often old but well kept. Inside is a warm, fresh atmosphere with modest furnishings. The food and drink are of considerable quantity and reasonable quality; however, variety is limited. Nightly entertainment is usually provided by local musicians or other local artists; occasionally, a group of traveling minstrels appears.

Two-star taverns are generally operated by a family; as a result, service is often personable and friendly. Two-star taverns are frequented by most of the local people, which keeps the activity levels high during the nighttime operating hours. Strangers in these areas are noticed, but are not necessarily treated with hostility.

Fights between drunken patrons can be expected to erupt, but the tavern owners do not permit it and act quickly to move the fight outside. Any damage to the furnishings of two-star taverns are to be paid for by those responsible.

Three-star taverns ★★★

Found in large towns and the wealthier sections of cities, three-star taverns provide excellent meals. These establishments are finely constructed and well kept. These taverns are usually quite large and often have stables which provide cover for patrons' steeds. Inside the tavern, the lighting is good, and the furniture neatly arranged. During the winter, a large fire will be burning, keeping the place adequately warm.

The patrons of three-star taverns are usually wealthy merchants, various city officials, adventurers, and any others with money to spend. The tavern owners usually work behind the bar and have a host of employees to serve patrons. A wide selection of food and drink are available, all of excellent quality. A large amount of information can be found in taverns of these sorts, especially information about outlying areas of which the merchants know.

Drunken patrons are politely asked to leave and are escorted outside. Fights are rare, and unruly guests are usually handled by the town guards, with whom the tavern owners are usually on good terms.

Four-star taverns ★★★★★

These taverns are only found in very large cities, and they are very rare. These structures are often small, multileveled, and constructed of the best materials. Often, these taverns are set off from the nearest road, are surrounded by a well-kept flower garden, and have elaborate furnishings.

Inside on the first level is a lounge, with the upper levels reserved for dining. The lounge furnishings are of the finest quality, and many decorations and artwork enhance this area. There is a stage for minstrels who play nightly. Both the food and drink are excellent. Four-star taverns

Table 4  
Tavern Foods

Food	Cost by tavern rating			
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★
Abalone	—	—	2 gp	7 gp
Apple	2 cp	3 cp	6 cp	1 sp
Banana	2 cp	2 cp	3 cp	6 cp
Bass	—	3 sp	10 sp	18 sp
Beans	4 cp	8 cp	1 sp	2 sp
Beef	7 sp	15 sp	1 gp	4 gp
Berries	—	2 cp	6 cp	1 sp
Boar	—	1 gp	2 gp	7 gp
Bread	1 cp	1 cp	3 cp	6 cp
Broth	4 cp	8 cp	1 sp	2 sp
Cabbage	1 cp	2 cp	5 cp	18 cp
Carrots	1 cp	2 cp	3 cp	5 cp
Chicken	5 cp	1 sp	4 sp	8 sp
Cheese	3 cp	8 cp	1 sp	4 sp
Clams	—	8 sp	14 sp	1 gp
Coconut	3 cp	6 cp	10 cp	1 sp
Corn	1 cp	2 cp	5 cp	8 cp
Crab	—	—	15 sp	1 gp
Dove	—	4 sp	8 sp	13 sp
Duck	2 sp	3 sp	6 sp	10 sp
Eggs	4 cp	6 cp	1 sp	3 sp
Game hen	—	4 sp	8 sp	18 sp
Goose	—	8 sp	14 sp	1 gp
Grapes	—	2 cp	5 cp	6 cp
Gruel	2 cp	6 cp	1 sp	—
Lamb	—	2 gp	4 gp	7 gp
Lobster	—	—	4 gp	8 gp
Mushrooms	1 cp	4 cp	10 cp	2 sp
Mutton	10 sp	15 sp	1 gp	2 gp
Orange	2 cp	4 cp	7 cp	1 sp
Oyster	—	15 sp	1 gp	5 gp
Peas	5 cp	9 cp	1 sp	2 sp
Peach	—	5 cp	8 cp	15 cp
Pear	—	5 cp	8 cp	15 cp
Pheasant	—	10 sp	15 sp	1 gp
Pork	12 sp	1 gp	2 gp	5 gp
Potatoes	1 cp	3 cp	5 cp	11 cp
Rabbit	—	—	15 sp	1 gp
Red Snapper	—	4 sp	8 sp	1 gp
Ribs	—	1 gp	4 gp	7 gp
Rice	1 cp	1 cp	2 cp	4 cp
Salmon	—	6 sp	12 sp	24 sp
Snake	—	—	5 sp	16 sp
soup	5 cp	1 sp	2 sp	4 sp
Stew	1 sp	2 sp	5 sp	9 sp
Squid	—	—	15 sp	1 gp
Trout	1 sp	3 sp	8 sp	18 sp
Tuna	—	5 sp	10 sp	1 gp
Turkey	5 cp	1 sp	5 sp	10 sp
Venison	—	—	2 gp	4 gp

All prices here assume easy availability and could be much higher if this is not so.

often feature a full bar with several servers and barmaids. There is usually some form of high-stakes gambling conducted here among the wealthy.

Upstairs, in the restaurant, are many tables for both large parties and single diners, a full kitchen staff, and a complete menu. It is possible to order very exotic foods and drinks, although for a substantial price.

These taverns are often family owned

but operated by employees of that family. Always well respected in the community, these families have usually operated their taverns for many generations. Service is excellent and always friendly. Normally, only the wealthy and royalty are allowed in these taverns, and all weapons are checked at the door. Public drunkenness laws are strictly observed here. These taverns are always a good opportunity to mix with the elite of the community.

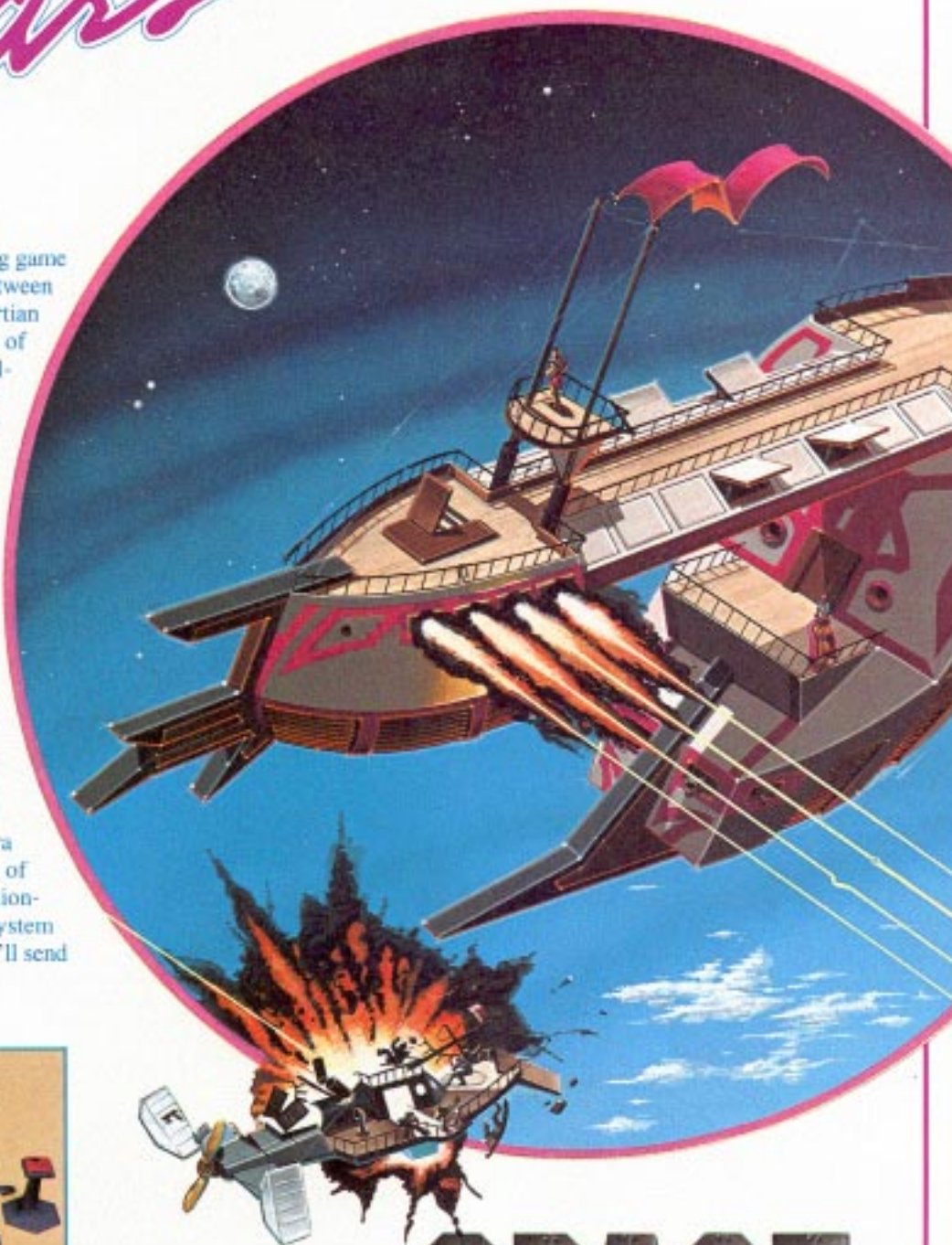


# SKY GALLEONS *OF Mars*

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by Jape Trostle

# Fifty Ways to Foil Your Players

## *NPC sometimes stands for Not Particularly Cooperative*

Life for a player character in a role-playing game can (and should) be perilous. But not everyone a game master creates in a campaign is out to kill the PCs; some just want to disturb their sanity. The next time your players are gearing up to take on some deadly nemesis or dangerous dungeon, add a few NPC foils to the game to enliven things.

While every good campaign has a wide variety of NPCs to encounter, foils are a special breed. Foils are specifically designed by the GM to antagonize a party of characters or an individual PC. Foils are colorful, meddling nuisances. They are uninvited and unwelcome minor obstacles that perpetually pop up in the PCs' lives — always when least desired and expected. Foils plague the players and exploit any foibles their characters may have by contrasting the PCs' personalities. Of course, the foils don't see it this way; it just *seems* like their purpose in life is to drive the players nuts.

This is not unrealistic. Just think of some people you know who regularly rub you the wrong way. Doesn't it seem like they antagonize you deliberately? Of course, sometimes that is the case....

However irritating foils may be, most are not very dangerous, and they can often provide comic relief as well as give a twist to the old adventure routine. The foil is not an NPC class; it is simply any NPC personality type who consistently thwarts the PCs in minor ways. This article provides 50 character stereotypes, each fol-

lowed by a short description, to assist the GM in creating foils to fit any campaign and the players involved. GMs are expected to develop those foils that appeal to them, so only a brief outline of each type is provided. It should be kept in mind that foils are nuisances and should pose no *immediate* physical threat to the PCs, so most should be relatively inexperienced. Race, sex, alignments, and so forth are usually irrelevant, and foils can appear as individuals or as groups. Although the listed foils are described for use in a medieval or fantasy game, they fit into any RPG scenario. Just picture their counterparts in science-fiction, superhero, espionage, and similar settings.

### **Individual foils**

1. *The tax man:* What more need be said? He is greedy, persistent, unpleasant, and always there — especially when the PCs return from a successful adventure. He is an oily snake who enjoys nothing better than squeezing that extra coin from the PCs' purse. He'll badger the PCs about town, showing up at their door or favorite tavern. The tax man is highly intelligent and shrewd — and he always has government backing. Without taxes, where would the local government be?

2. *The fool:* This giggling, cackling jester cannot — and will not — shut up. He is always talking, joking, lying, boasting (he likes to boast about the PCs' abilities to rivals and opponents), and ridiculing others. As a result, he will probably get the

PCs into more trouble than they can get out of. This foil has an above-normal intelligence and dexterity, with below-average wisdom, and shows up in taverns and on street corners.

3. *The creditor:* If the PCs have ever borrowed money or are escaping bad debts, the creditor and his agents are sure to be on their trails. The creditor goes wherever a debt goes. A creditor could take any shape, but has the persistence of a bounty-hunting Scrooge. Repo men are also of concern here.

4. *The landlord:* This mousy little man or woman is always eavesdropping, prying, and raising the rent. The landlord is convinced the PCs are up to no good and wants to know what's going on. The landlord is only found in the inn or apartment where the PCs are staying.

5. *The ignoble noble:* This stuffy, self-righteous lord or lady looks down at everyone — especially the PCs. Loud, pretentious, obnoxious, arrogant, and rich, the ignoble noble does not have one wit of common sense. This pompous, petty noble abuses the PCs ("Out of my way, lout!") until needing their services — which, of course, are assumed to be always at his disposal. Ignoble nobles can be found in elite establishments, at court, out hunting, or traveling between these places.

6. *The religious zealot:* This priest or follower of some obscure religion is always preaching against the evils of the PCs' ways, no matter how good the PCs might be. Even paladins do not measure up to the zealot's standards. Wherever found — be it street corner, tavern, or temple — the religious zealot is always up on a soapbox, with the PCs as targets.

7. *The gambler:* Never obvious, this slick game player is out to take the PCs for everything they have — again, again, and again. The gambler has a high intelligence, good looks, and is very charismatic and persuasive. The gambler can be found in taverns, on corners, and at games and tournaments — any place where people gamble.

8. *The con man:* What the gambler doesn't take, this foil will. Fake treasure maps, dummy magical weapons, bogus potions — the con man has them all. He is slick and smooth, and has above-average intelligence and charisma. By nature of his precarious position, the con man is always on the move and can thus be found in a wide variety of places. Although most of his wares are worthless, the con man will once in a great while (and without his knowledge) sell something that is genuine. In these instances, since he was unaware of its validity at the point of sale, he will probably want it back if he finds out. A prime example of a con man is Mr. Henney from the TV series *Green Acres*, or a



snake-oil salesman from the Old West.

9. *The merchant*: One step above the con man, the merchant's items are quite real. However, this fast-tongued fellow will always try to sell the PCs something they do not need. If he is a traveling salesman, he could show up anywhere (like that time he tried to sell pole arms to kobolds in the local dungeon). Cyrano Jones from the *Star Trek* episode "The Trouble With Tribbles" is a good example of this type.

10. *The doorman*: Whether a bouncer at a tavern or gate guard at a keep, the doorman will never simply let the PCs walk through the door. His job is to keep people out, and that means the PCs. Even if he has orders to show the PCs in, he will do so grudgingly. Of course, he needs the brawn to back up his job, so a high strength and constitution are recommended, though he does not necessarily have to be a fighter.

11. *The jealous lover or lover's spouse*: Amorous PCs who pursue several lovers at once run the risk that a cheated lover or spouse will find out and come after the PC in question. The foil is usually an important and influential figure, such as a powerful merchant or official. Whoever the jilted lover is, the PC is bound for trouble!

12. *The catty lover*: This is a particularly jealous and troublesome lover who is never satisfied with peace and quiet. He or she constantly generates a hurricane of problems for the PC to which he or she is attached, though the PC may find it hard to give up the relationship.

13. *The would-be mate*: This is someone who believes he or she would make the perfect mate for one of the PCs. This is also someone who does not know the meaning of the word "no." This foil is usually undesirable in one measure or another, having poor looks, a loud mouth, a pushy personality, or terrible personal hygiene.

14. *The PC's relative*: This foil needs little explanation. If the relative doesn't want money, he or she has "someone nice" (usually a would-be suitor) for the PC to meet. A relative's favorite saying is "Blood is thicker than water."

15. *The captain of the guard*: For some reason, the captain doesn't like the looks of the PCs and will harass them whenever they are in town. He knows they are up to no good, and even if they aren't, he will make something up. Although a hindrance, the captain is only a minor threat, as his ego is greater than his fighting ability. Since he is a somewhat commanding character, the captain should have an above-average charisma. He can be found making his rounds about the town or dropping in on the PCs to let them know that he still has his eye on them. Local sheriffs also fit this role.

16. *The town official*: This foil, usually a mayor, councilor, or burgher, gives the words "inept" and "bungling" true meaning. Usually fat and lazy, the loud and self-important town official never really knows what is going on around him. Always image conscious, the town official shows up at various functions and events about town, and his opinions on current events change like the wind.

17. *The dandy*: A foppish, arrogant lad, always dressed in the latest fashion, the dandy is quite a fair-weather friend. He insists on being seen with the PCs if they are successful and popular, and ridicules them if they are not. Either way, the dandy always acts as a superior to the PCs because they don't dress as well as he does. This handsome, foolish fop can be found in taverns or any place that might make him look good.

18. *The fledgling bard*: This would-be minstrel is on the lookout for heroes to interview so he can compose his first great epic. Found in and around taverns, inns, and any place else adventuring types might gather, this scraggly lad sings out of tune and plays the lute horribly.

19. *The matriarchal goodwife*: This clucking hen either berates the PCs for not coming up to her own impeccable moral standards or, if the PCs are upstanding citizens such as paladins or good clerics, constantly plays matchmaker for the hapless characters. Found in the marketplace or hanging out the window of her home (gossiping), this large, tough woman won't take lip from anyone, and believes that no one (except nobility) is above a good thrashing.

20. *The mad prophet*: This insane old geezer is the butt of many jokes around the town and countryside. He wanders about aimlessly and without direction, often showing up in unusual places. Dirty and ragged, the mad prophet talks to himself and makes little sense. Sometimes, however, he speaks of things that do come true — perhaps he's a little psychic as well as psychotic.

21. *The old soldier*: This old, withered warrior loves nothing better than pulling up a chair to the PCs' table and telling lots of unbelievable yarns about the good old days. Adorned in rusted armor, he talks and talks, occasionally dropping some important fact in the PCs' laps — if they are still listening, that is.

22. *The would-be adventurer*: This small boy or girl (or group of children) adopts a PC as a role model. This foil will follow the party about, imitating everything the PCs do. Would-be adventurers are only found around towns and villages, and only until their mothers call them in for bedtime.

23. *The loyal dog*: When a would-be adventurer reaches adolescence and is still



hanging around the player characters, he becomes a loyal dog, willing to do anything for the PCs. Awkward and gangly, the loyal dog's enthusiasm gets in the way as he rushes about doing favors for the PCs. The reason these foils are called loyal dogs is because the PCs always find them underfoot.

24. *The crush*: Similar to the loyal dog, this is an adolescent whose first crush is on one of the PCs. The crush will do anything for a "beloved" — except leave the PC alone.

25. *The apprentice magic-user*: This bright though bungling kid is apprenticed off to a low-level, unadventurous magic-user who likes to stay put in town. The apprentice, however, dreams of adventure and likes to hang around the PCs. Likewise, he always wants to show the adventurers the latest cantrip he's learned. Unlike would-be adventurers or loyal dogs, the apprentice actually has a useful (if weak) skill. A knight's squire fits this category as well.

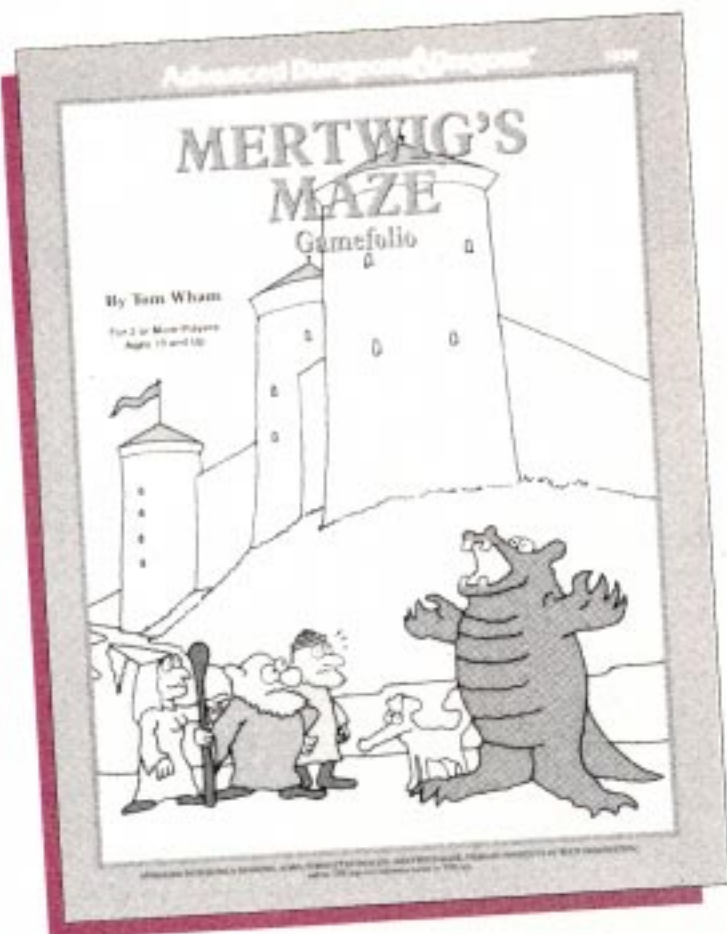
26. *The street urchin*: The young street urchin loves nothing better than following the PCs around town and taunting them. He is amazingly fast, both in dexterity and intelligence. This foil is a real pain but knows the surrounding area better than anyone. There is a chance (25%) that the street urchin is a low-level thief.

27. *The younger sibling*: This very young (12 years old or less) sister or brother of one of the PCs wants to be just like the older sibling. In other instances, the PC is the child's guardian, and the sibling

# Finally

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refuses to obey the PC. Either way, the younger sibling is troublesome.

28. *The unwanted pet*: This small animal adopts the PCs, usually after they have innocently fed the beast when it was hungry. This pet will follow (often quite loudly) the PCs anywhere, even into battle or into a dungeon. The pet is usually a cat, dog, or other domesticated animal, but could have a serious defense mechanism (like a skunk).

29. *The adoring monster*: If the PCs have ever spared some small, semi-intelligent creature from death (for example, a kobold), the grateful monster is bound to show up later, latch onto the group, and try to prove its worth to its saviors. Unlike unwanted pets, an adoring monster is unusual and can be powerful and (relatively) intelligent.

30. *The bumbling bartender*: This friendly, forgetful butterball always means well, which does not keep him from being a bumbling idiot. He can run a tavern either in a town or out in the countryside. Butterbur, the innkeeper at The Prancing Pony in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, is a good example.

31. *The brainless brute*: The town bully is out to prove he is the toughest around by beating up all the small guys he can get his hands on. His strength is equal to his cowardice; he talks big, but he rarely backs up his words with action.

32. *The reveler*: Loud, obnoxious, and always broke, this happy-go-lucky fellow is always ready to knock back a few with his favorite adventurers — as long as they pay. A large fellow with an enormous appetite and thirst, the reveler knows hundreds of bad jokes and tall tales, and will tell them all if given the opportunity. Shakespeare's Falstaff is such a reveler.

33. *The overzealous soldier*: This soldier, usually a low-level fighter in the city guard or army, is a loyal patriot of whatever kingdom, nation, fief, or empire in which the PCs happen to find themselves. The overzealous soldier knows more about rules and regulations than fighting, and is constantly suspicious of the PCs and their activities. He sees plots where there are none.

34. *The snitch*: Spindly and thin, the snitch resembles a rat more than a man. If he isn't telling the PCs about others' plans, they can be sure he's telling others of theirs. This motormouth is always spouting names, places, rumors, and lies. He can usually be found slinking about dark alleys and taverns, trying to eavesdrop on any and all conversations.

35. *The inventor*: This clever, little, old, white-haired fellow is a mechanical genius — well, sometimes. He sees the PCs as just the people to try out his new contraptions, even though most of his creations don't work at all the way they are supposed to. Every so often, though, he comes up with a gem. Highly intelligent, the inventor can usually be found in his shop or out trying to perfect his inventions. More often than

not, however, he will be out looking for PC volunteers.

36. *The hapless hermit*: A quiet, mystical man, the hermit is never found in a populated area, but in a secluded place where he can contemplate reality. Unfortunately, he has the misfortune to pick secluded spots that the PCs eventually stumble across. Each time he is disturbed, he searches out another place, which the PCs also stumble across. Long-bearded and eccentric, the hermit's patience with unwelcome (i.e., all) visitors is short.

37. *The lady in distress*: This is a feisty wench who always manages to get in some sort of trouble from which she needs rescuing, usually when the PCs are nearby. Whether a serving girl with a smart mouth or a noble lady who has a bad habit of being kidnapped regularly, this foil should keep the PCs busy. As a rule of thumb, the damsel usually has a high charisma and a low wisdom (otherwise, she would learn to stay out of trouble). She is not necessarily romantically inclined toward a PC. Another form of this NPC is the "man overboard," usually a careless adventurer who overestimates his abilities and is always in deep trouble, from which PCs must rescue him.

38. *The seductress*: Once her sights are set on one of the PCs (or the whole group for that matter!), this *femme fatale* won't stop until the PC is hers, body and soul. Although beautiful, she is sly, devious, resourceful, and persistent in her game of love. And she does not have to be of low social status; she could be a lady of high society. The male version of this foil for the female PC is the *Don Juan*, identical in all respects. Unlike other potential mates, this one is often domineering, selfish, and rarely faithful.

39. *The vestal virgin*: This unobtainable, untouchable figurehead of a temple or kingdom, such as a young high priestess or princess of extreme beauty, has fallen in unrequited love with one of the PCs. She is entirely naive and innocent in the ways of politics and love, and does not realize that her affections could cause problems — especially for the PCs. Because of her position, approaching the vestal virgin is taboo, and being caught with her is punishable by death.

### Group foils

40. *The party people*: These roving packs of dandies and revelers are out to have a good time — at the PCs' expense. Young, boisterous, loud, and looking for trouble, the party people can be found late at night in the streets and hopping from tavern to tavern.

43. *The court schemers*: These conniving, petty nobles have plans for advancement at the royal court — plans that usually involve the PCs. Court schemers usually have a favor or errand that needs to be done, and are sure to put in a good word to the king for themselves. Their plots are full of intrigue, but their wisdom

scores are low. These foils are found in and around capital cities where there is a royal court.

42. *The city guard*: In this case, it is not the captain of the guard who holds the grudge against the PCs, it is the rest of the guard. This group always picks fights with the PCs, looks for reasons to harass them, accuses them of crimes they didn't commit, or sets them up for embarrassing situations. The players should remember that the city generally looks down on anyone killing a member of the city guard.

43. *The brothel*: This horde of harlots is constantly ready to tempt the good PCs (especially those who have taken vows), or scorn the less savory PCs' advances. "Nothing should ever be easy — or free" is their motto. This group is only found in or in front of a house of ill-repute in the less savory parts of town.

44. *The marks*: These low-level NPCs have actually bought items from the con man, and they run into the PCs while using the objects (items such as a fake treasure map that marks the treasure's location right in the PCs' home keep, or the flying carpet that only flies "when it feels like it"). There is a great potential for comedy with these foils; just picture Laurel and Hardy in a role-playing game!

45. *The thieves' guild*: The guild elders in the town or city in which the PCs currently reside have established that the PCs' party is a "practice group" for all the fledgling thieves, and that they are to be fleeced at every opportunity by the apprentices. (And the PCs would not want to bring the wrath of the entire guild on their heads because of a dead footpad or two, would they?)

46. *The unfriendly guild*: In a town or city where every form of commerce is controlled by one guild or another, the one guild the PCs rely upon the most (be it Weapons Guild, Alchemists Guild, Merchants Guild, or Magic-User Material Component Supply Guild) is the one guild that doesn't like the PCs.

47. *The orphanage*: Woe to the PCs, for this is an entire building full of street urchins, would-be adventurers, and crushes who enjoy nothing more than playing every practical joke conceivable (such as chamber-pot bombs dropped from the roof, spurs placed under a saddle, or grease wiped on sword handles) on the hapless PCs. Of course, these demons instantly transform into perfect angels whenever the headmaster is about.

### Special foils

The three foils listed hereafter are special foils for several reasons. All three can be used to start entire adventures, so they are not just casual encounters. All three could prove to be dangers to the PCs' lives and limbs, though that is not always the case. Finally, all three have different purposes than merely annoying NPCs or groups of characters.

48. *The unknown entity*: This can be a

powerful, playful, flippant godling who amuses himself by popping in and out of the PCs' lives. Sometimes he helps them and sometimes he leaves them in the lurch, but he always leaves them without a clue as to what's going on. This foil must be played carefully so the PCs do not come to depend on it too much. Tolkien's Tom Bombadil is a good example of such a character. Invariably, the PCs are being steered toward some larger goal in the entity's plans — perhaps to literally save the world.

49. *The rival(s)*: This is a rival for one of the PCs or a group of rivals for the whole group. Rivals should be adventurers of the same levels and similar classes as the PCs (with a few variations thrown in to make things interesting) who are constantly competing with the PC party for whatever the current goal is. This group should keep the PCs on their toes and make cooperation among the PCs more likely, as it also adds an element of pressure to the proceedings. A foil such as this can add incentive to the game, as the PCs not only try to overcome their current goal (be it dungeon or quest), but also attempt to beat their rivals to it. Rivals, of course, are not necessarily evil — they are just rivals.

50. *The case of mistaken identity*: If played right, this foil can be a real laugh. The case of mistaken identity involves a coincidence in which one of the PCs just happens to look like some NPC of whom the party has never heard. Other NPCs are constantly mistaking the PC for this other person, which is not good, for this other person apparently has the entire town and countryside looking for him because of something he has done (which is often bad). The poor PC is then always accused of being this lowlife, who is quite a cad and scoundrel. This scenario can be very effective if the PCs decide to go after this rogue and straighten things out. To make things interesting, though, the PCs are also unable to find him; they find only his trail of broken hearts, busted heads, bad debts, and angry enemies.

### How to play foils

This list of foils is designed to aid the GM in creating colorful NPCs and potentially interesting encounters. As they are only suggestions, the GM can develop the foils as he sees fit. But above all, foils should be fun and should provide lively subplots for a campaign.

A foil should be designed with the PCs in mind. If a GM has an idea of what best irks the PC (or the player, for that matter), then that trait should be incorporated into the NPC. If, for instance, the PCs are particularly gold-hungry, the tax man is a good antagonist. If the PCs enjoy a rousing night on the town every night, the captain of the guard would be a suitable foil. Perhaps the reveler would be the choice for a PC that is quiet and subdued, such as a studious magic-user. For those PCs that flirt with the opposite sex, the jealous or

catty lover is bound to show up. And if the PCs are politically active, the ignoble noble, the court schemers, or the town official would be appropriate.

Then again, a foil could just be a pest. The fledgling bard, the loyal dog, and the unwanted pet are all cases of foils who don't know when they have worn out their welcome. If the PCs fancy themselves as rescuers of fair maidens everywhere, then the lady who needs constant rescuing ought to keep them entertained and on the run — until they collapse from exhaustion.

Foils do not have to be human; any race can bring its own peculiar traits to the role of antagonist. A halfling can be just as exasperating as any human. The Halfling Thieves Guild from the classic *DRAGON* Magazine comic "Finieous Fingers" is a perfect (if lethal) example of this. Race itself can act as a foil to some characters: Imagine a party of elves having to deal with a guild run by dwarves. In whatever case, a foil can be introduced in the campaign to goad just one of the PCs or the entire party at once, so the various NPCs can be molded to fit a particular temperament or scenario. It is all up to the GM.

A majority of the NPCs listed above are noted for being found in and around cities and towns. This is assuming that most of the encounters of the foil kind will occur as the PCs are recuperating between big adventures that take place in dungeons and the wilderness. However, this does not mean the PCs could not run into a foil in the most unlikely of places. Foils can show up before, during, or after an adventure in any place the GM wants them. Naturally, some encounters are more likely than others. The ignoble noble could be found while out on a hunt or visiting a foreign kingdom where the PCs are currently exploring a dungeon; the mad prophet could be seen in a far-off forest preaching to the trees; and the marks, the rivals, the merchant, or the unknown entity could show up anywhere.

Foils also give good lessons in restraint: PCs should never be easily rid of one, and there should be no hack-and-slash response to the problem. These encounters should only be solved by employing wit, guile, and ingenious role-playing. Some NPCs are so harmless that severe repercussions should occur if the PCs kill one. For those not-so-harmless or innocent foils, the PCs will want to think twice before trying to permanently dispose of them. These NPCs will be backed by some organization or benefactor which would make life rather uncomfortable for the PCs if anything fatal were to happen to the foil. (Of course, a good thrashing might not hurt.) Nonviolent solutions, however, should be encouraged. In fact, experience points should be awarded for the more clever retorts. Foils are a test of wit and ingenuity, not of strength and weaponry.

A prime example of how to foil a foil is the crafty solution arrived at by a party in a recent campaign of this GM. The PCs

had been plagued by one very snobbish ignoble noble. For various reasons, he was using his political influence to make the PCs look bad to local officials. The PCs could not confront him directly, for he had a very high profile with many connections and supporters. Instead, they began a rumor that he had contracted a socially unacceptable disease, one of the symptoms of which was premature baldness. Then, during a large banquet attended by both the PCs and the noble, the group's magic-user got close enough to the noble to cast the cantrip *hair loss* on him, and his long, curly locks promptly fell into his soup (notch one for the players). The embarrassed noble soon departed for an extended vacation and was never again as bad a thorn in the PCs' collective side.

Alas, solutions tend to be temporary where foils are concerned. These NPCs will probably be back, much to the players' chagrin. As a result, foils should not always spell trouble. About the time they completely wear out their welcome and the PCs are pushed to the point of strangling them, the foils should drop some vital information the players can use: a clue to a current mystery, information on an enemy, the whereabouts of a needed item or map — anything to stave off the PCs' wrath. Perhaps the GM could have the foil help the PCs out of a difficult, life-threatening situation. (A foil likes nothing better than gratitude.)

A well-played foil will cultivate an interesting love/hate relationship with the PCs. However, if the PCs catch on and deliberately seek out the foil for help or information, they should discover that the NPC is now harder to find than he was to lose before. (And if found, the foil should be suspicious and defensive about the PCs seeking him out.) If sought in such a manner, foils will not freely give the help or information that is desired. Thus, foils can get the PCs coming and going.

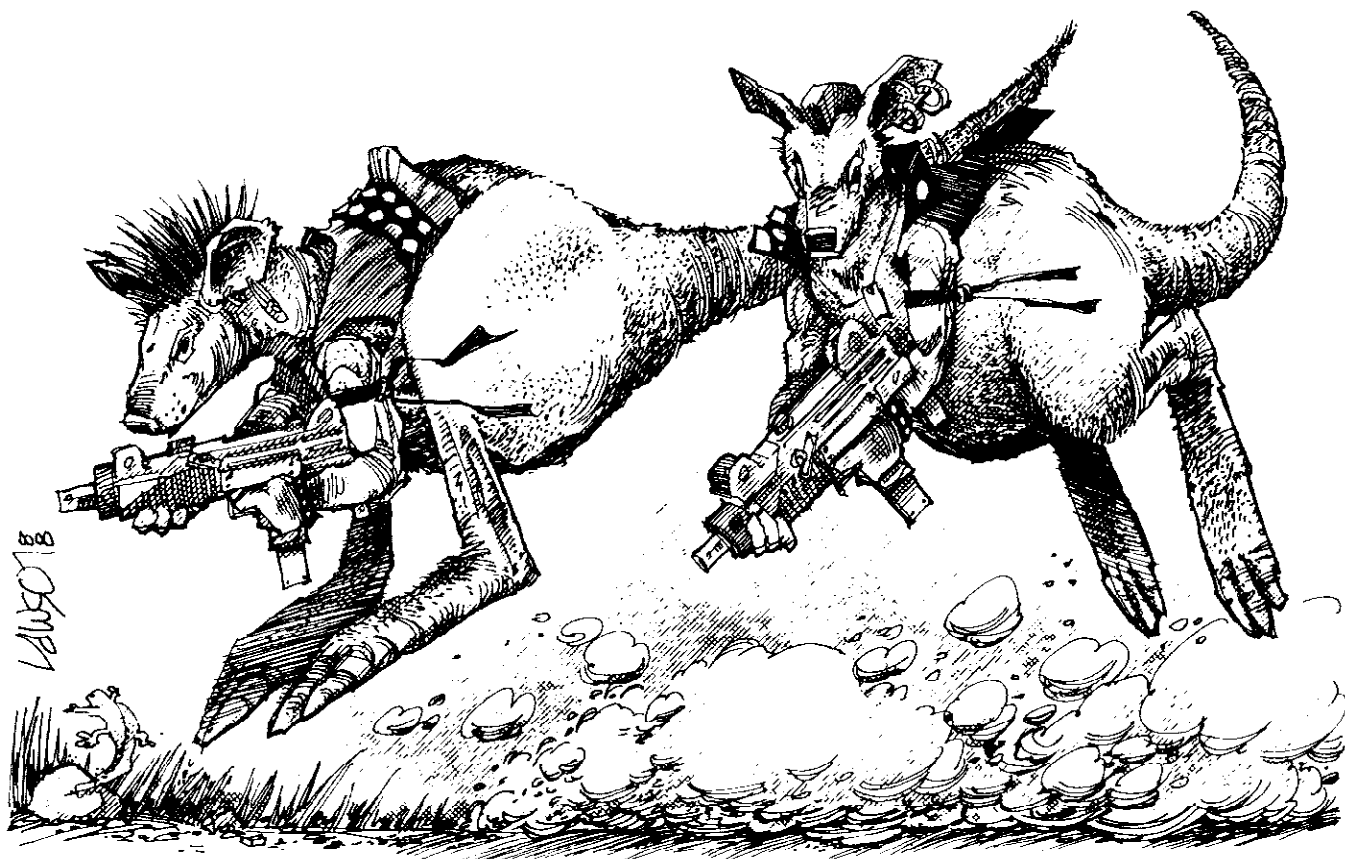
Too much of a good thing can bog down a game; consequently, NPC foils should not be overused. Too many foils can cause too much frustration among the players and limit their enjoyment of the game. It is recommended that no more than two or three NPCs be encountered over a period of time as full-time antagonists. After using them awhile, the GM should have them disappear off the scene to pop up unpredictably in the future. The reaction from a player on seeing the return of an old foil is often remarkable.

Such characters, when played to the hilt and with a touch of humor, can turn previously forgettable NPC encounters into events as memorable as any perilous dungeon or deadly dragon.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following for their suggestions regarding types of foils (and who are effective foils themselves): Rick Caldwell, Dann Caldwell, and Brent Trostle.





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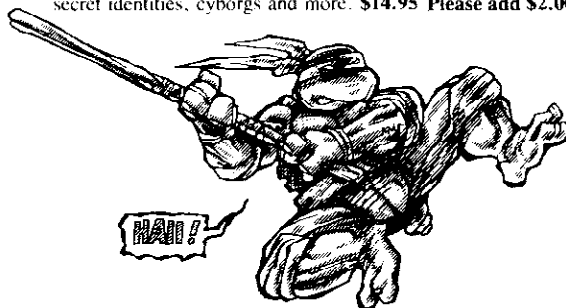
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Sulak eased his heavy body from a bed made of beach grass and felt around for his glasses. He almost knocked them off the sea trunk, which would have been a disaster for the aged magician, but his little finger, the one twisted with arthritis, hooked them by the wings. His hands shook as he righted them, then pushed the wires back through the dirty curls of his hair and over large ears. Now he could see in the dark interior of the hut.

He picked up the cane he'd made from a length of dry driftwood, and banged all the pots that hung on pegs or wires until the rats zipped away. Stepping around the assorted debris he'd salvaged over the years, he shuffled toward the door but stopped short. A small, sleek head poked out of the shadows to his left. Its eyes were beady, reptilian.

When he brought the tip of his gnarled cane up between himself and the hidden creature, it quickly slipped away through two ship's planks that framed the jamb on which his door latched. The old magician cackled.

Just a damn monitor lizard, he thought. Not his old nemesis the boa. She was too fat to slip between the boards like that. And besides, if the snake had gotten in during the night, he would have awakened in her embrace.

Sulak pushed the door open, squinting against the morning light until he could make out the scraggly brush and the ice plants that surrounded his hut. He stepped outside. It was a sunny day, the first that spring. Before him, black-headed terns wheeled against the sky and dove for ghost crabs along the beach. Their calls reached him scattered by the breeze. Behind him, iguanas and monitor lizards basked on the twisted volcanic rock of Herculus. The wind was warm from across the narrow bay and smelled wonderful, like a breath of glory from his past, from when his powers held sway with the Magi Lords and he had strolled through the gardens of the high city with many a court lady on his arm.

An unbidden image rose up in Sulak's mind, the Lady Alcina in a gown of silver strands. He remembered her bare arms, how one minute they could be pale and smooth as polished moonstone, the next instant darkly tanned and downed with blond hair. He recalled her mercurial beauty and impossible treachery, both of which still burned within his chest. Oh well, Sulak mused for the countless time, he should never have bedded a witch in the first place.

Damn, it almost felt good still to be alive after so many years in exile. Almost.

Sulak cupped rainwater from a battered barrel near the corner of his hut. He slurped it in a single gulp . . . then spit out a fowl yellow stinkbug and cursed loudly at Herculus, this island prison that kept him from the world beyond, that seemed to destroy his mood every time he felt pleased or satisfied or merely at peace with himself.

But Sulak knew that wasn't true. Herculus was only a jumbled pile of rock and dirt with a volcano slumbering at its core. Long ago he had accepted its rugged landscape, just as he had been forced to accept the spell that held him here and stripped him of his powers, the same spell that

# The Curse of the Magus

by Bruce Boston & Robert Frazier

*Illustrations by George Barr*

also stilled the island's hot lava. If he had any enemies on Herculius besides the boa, they were of his own making, the memories he refused to abandon, which plagued his thoughts constantly and in recent years often seized his consciousness with spells of visionary intensity.

Sulak donned his greatcoat of worn blue velvet, the one with the silver epaulets and tattered silk lining. Though he'd meet no one — for just as he was entrapped here, no other human could enter — he wanted to walk the perimeter beach of his conical prison in style and discover what new treasures the ocean might have washed onto its shores. He had begun every morning like this when he was younger, so after a winter of especially poor health, he yearned for this simple ritual all the more. He took up his cane and started down to the beach.

Where the fine brown sand darkened to the black and grainy sand of an old lava flow, a glint of light caught Sulak's eye. Something was embedded near the shoreline, still lapped by the low and steady waves yet catching the sun's reflection each time the sea receded. Sulak danced gingerly forward and poked at the object with his stick. He gasped as a gold coin rolled free onto the damp earth.

Suddenly oblivious to the cold surf flooding about his ankles, Sulak bent over and retrieved the coin. He quickly cleaned it on his sleeve, marveling at how the heavy metal could have traveled to him across the water. Yet the question fled from his mind as he lifted his glasses onto his forehead and peered more closely at his find.

Intricately embossed upon the gold was a skyline that Sulak recognized at once. He saw the slender towers and delicately arched skywalks of his native city. The coin was from his homeland, Myria, the greatest island empire of the Southern Sea, and by the look of it, freshly minted. He turned the coin over and his old eyes widened and froze, the breath catching within his throat. It was true then. All that he had imagined and feared in the years since his exile had transpired. He was staring at the slightly raised and bony profile of his ancient enemy Borgus, now apparently Arch-Magus of the Empire.

A hoarse, incoherent cry broke from Sulak's throat as his breath exploded. He hurled the coin far from him, back out over the water from which it had come. If not for Alcina's betrayal, if not for Borgus' endless plotting and the cronies he gathered about him, minor magicians to a man, Sulak's own countenance would have most likely shone upon that coin. The old magician waved his stick about wildly as he stumbled up the beach. The past would never let him be, he thought. Not when his present was so paltry. Not when the emptiness of each successive day only foreshadowed the emptiness of his diminished future. All of Sulak's limbs were trembling violently as he collapsed onto the sand and a draught of bitter history possessed him.

The Lady Alcina looked up. Tonight her eyes were deep brown flecked with yellow, warm and constant as the eyes of a cat. She laughed and pressed her body more closely against his. They were standing on the balcony of the chambers Sulak had been recently granted in the high city, looking over the lighted streets below and a smooth sheet

of darkening sea in the distance. The day had been warm and the evening seemed warmer still. The first stars glowed with raw brilliance in a cloudless sky.

They were naked beneath their robes, their flesh still dewy from lovemaking, and Sulak was intoxicated, both with the protean incarnations of the woman beside him and his own sudden rise to power, for no magician in recent memory had gained a seat among the Magi Lords while still so young. A bit vehemently, he was expounding his theories, ideas he was convinced that he alone had grasped.

"But magic is leaving the world," he insisted. "Each year I've measured the changes with the basic spells. The forces always grow weaker, our sphere of influence shrinks. In the time of our grandfather's fathers the Empire extended beyond the Straits of Gade and onto the mainland. Now only the islands remain to us."

"And what can it matter?" Alcina laughed again. "Surely there is enough magic left in the world to fill our own lives."

Sulak was appalled by her indifference. At the same time he discovered he was aroused again. The witch grasped the back of his neck and pulled him roughly toward her. Her lips and tongue tasted of iced apricots in the heated night. No, rather they held the flavor of almonds rolled in candied grape leaves. And then she was melting in his arms, and the balcony on which they stood, the sky above and the city below, faded like foam upon the waves.

Sulak found himself in the High Council chambers, speaking before the Magi Lords. He wore his new silk-lined jacket of blue velvet. "The future belongs not to amulets and incantations," he concluded, "but to reason, to the ordered thoughts of the rational mind. And that is why if we are to survive, our finest magic and finest reason must be bound together." He clasped his hands with fingers intertwined to illustrate the point. "Our engineers, our architects, and our philosophers must be elevated in stature to a rightful place upon the Council."

From the steep and darkly shadowed tiers of the assemblage, only silence greeted this final pronouncement. And then one man rose, illuminating his face with his own magic. Borgus' skeletal visage, aglow in the etheric light, was florid and creased with anger. "We have heard such theories before," he began, flinging one long arm downward in a dismissive gesture to the stage below, "and we have rightly denounced them as the mouthings of barbarians."

Sulak nervously fingered a lapel. How could this be, he wondered, his jacket was not new but worn and falling to pieces? Borgus was not really here, only upon the gold coin he held in his palm. But that was not right either, for hadn't he hurled the coin back into the ocean?

The old magician came to himself, once more walking along the beach. He felt the sun, warm upon his face, the sea wind tousling his mop of hair.

Sulak recognized the spell for what it had been and knew he had survived its passage. The ordered thoughts of a rational mind he had once espoused with such eloquence and vigor were once again his own. Yet the aged magician suspected that one day his visions would carry him away



completely, that he would starve to death or fall prey to the boa while immersed in his own useless past.

He was nearly halfway round the island when he saw the chair jutting out of the black sand far ahead. At first he didn't recognize it. The wood had swelled and discolored in the waves, and it had soaked in the brine for at least a month, as evidenced by the young barnacles dotting it like liver spots. However, when he stood in front of it, there could be little doubt it was the royal chair of a Magus, and the Arch-Magus at that. It was the very chair in which Sulak should have sat for life. He stared at it in disbelief.

What was it doing on the beach? And what circumstances had prevailed to allow the jeweled chair to become just another bit of driftwood?

Sulak recalled a vivid dream he'd had on the full moon before last. He'd dreamt of Borgus awkwardly seated in this same chair that now rested on the shores of Herculus. In the dream the chair was perched upon the foredeck of a sailing ship. Borgus was leading an armada of war vessels against the mainland republics. His cronies, the very men who had conspired in Sulak's abduction and exile, commanded ships of their own. Then a storm blew suddenly in from the north, torrential and devastating. It had scattered the fleet in every direction, drowned more than half the vessels before a single spell could unravel it.

That same night, Sulak remembered, a storm had rattled against the walls of his hut. At the time he had taken the storm for the cause of his dream, but what if the reverse were true? Perhaps his dream had somehow served as an agent of revenge for his long-repressed powers.

Sulak shook his head to clear the cobwebs. No matter. Simply frustrating Borgus was not a satisfying revenge. Nor was having the damn chair after so many years.

So Sulak's second reaction was one of anger. He kicked at the chair until his chest heaved, then whacked it with his cane. When none of his actions seemed to cause the slightest damage, he conceded that he'd grown very weak during the winter. Then he realized that despite its briny journey, the chair might still contain magic of its own. And that thought struck him dumb. If the chair still harbored magic, he could use it to weaken the spells that kept his own potent powers in check. Even the master spell that cloaked the island and held its volcanic activity to a minimum might eventually be broken.

Sulak made his way back along the coarse sand, through the thin wall of brush that separated it from the barren interior of igneous ropes and rock pillows. He knew that the chair of the Arch-Magus possessed a kind of dim sentience linked to its owner. Steeped as it was with the spells of Borgus, the wood of the chair would recognize and rebel against an unfamiliar touch. Its magic was useless to him now. Sulak must first make the chair a part of his daily existence until the strength of his personality began to permeate its being. Only then would it offer up its powers.

At his hut, for the first time in years, the old magician whistled as he cooked himself a hearty breakfast. He would need all his strength to rebuild and rearrange his

space so the chair would fit inside, and double that amount to drag the great wooden beast the length of the island.

Rather than rework the old boards of his beach hut, Sulak simply knocked down one wall. As he sat eating his breakfast of crab meat and boiled guillemot eggs, staring inland toward the smoking rim of Herculus, he felt well pleased with himself. However, the problem of moving the chair proved more difficult.

At first he attempted brute force. The chair eventually yielded, and Sulak freed its legs from the wet sand with an audible pop. After that, however, it was impossible to drag on its back. He flipped it onto its front by leveraging it with his cane. He was then able to drag it on the tips of the armrests. This worked well enough for ten yards or so at a stretch, but the arms were too narrow. They kept digging into the sand, and Sulak had to wrestle the whole thing free each time. Soon exhausted, he rested against a sun-baked rock and nibbled on some jerky he had dried from lizard meat. He had to face facts. He was nearly sixty, and unwell. Force was not an option for him.

Returning to his hut once more, Sulak pried two boards loose from the collapsed wall. Warped ones made better runners, since their ends turned up, so he lashed these to the arms of the chair and pulled with his spine braced against the top of the back rest. The arms no longer caught in the sand, but he could still make progress only in short, heated bursts of energy that left his temples throbbing and the breath rasping in his throat. There were moments when he swore he could sense the reluctant spirit of Borgus, locked within the chair, consciously resisting him.

The sun had already passed meridian when he decided he could take no more. He estimated that he'd progressed less than a third of the distance he needed to cover.

Sulak retreated to a small rocky lagoon adjacent to his hut, really a tide pool now that the ocean was at low ebb. The old magician stripped off his clothes and slowly eased himself into the refreshing water. He lay with his eyes closed and his head against a bank made spongy by the homes of fiddler and ghost crabs.

The ordered thoughts of a rational mind, Sulak told himself, as he tried to devise an easier way to transport the chair to his hut. Instead he slept, and he dreamt of oxen.

He was back on his native island, once more immersed in the events of his former life. He was instructing the local farmers in the use of a yoke he had designed so that the untilled recesses of the steeper hillsides could be plowed. In some quarters he had been praised for this and for other inventions he had introduced into the daily life of the Empire. To most of the Magi Lords it was further evidence that Sulak had been soiled by the commonplace. Only weeks later, Alcina had fed him the potion that heralded his downfall. Even as the drug took effect, the evil witch continued her seduction.

Sulak had returned to consciousness stripped of both power and speech by a consorted spell of Borgus and his minions. In the mockery of a trial that followed, the young mage stood upon the public block, his tongue

dumb within his mouth, the thoughts raging uselessly within his mind, as charges of treason were leveled against him. He had corrupted the sacred traditions of the past. He had conspired with the mainland republics against his own nation. Those he had counted as friends and allies in his attempt to transform the Empire watched his humiliation silently, spoke not a word in his defense. While Sulak had plumbed the meaning of life and the natural world about him, Borgus had steadily consolidated his own political strength.

Yet as the convicted "traitor" rode in an open cart to the harbor and the ship that would bear him into exile, he realized it was more than Borgus' deceit that had carried the day. Sulak grasped the broader implications of his failure. As the very populace he had tried to save thronged the streets of the capital to rain their curses upon him, as he scanned their angry and righteous faces, he understood that the influence of magic was not only leaving the world, at the same time the very nature of its power grew darker. That darkness had already rooted itself, perhaps irrevocably, in the souls of his countrymen. And it was the self-same darkness, fixed but unrecognized in his own soul, that had drawn him to Alcina.

When Sulak awoke, he heard an iguana barking only a few yards away. This startled him. The great lizards usually avoided him, since he preyed on them occasionally for meat. Sulak raised himself from the pool and felt for his robe where he'd left it on the sand. He needed to wipe his eyeglasses, which he'd tinkered together with wire and the bottoms of apothecary bottles after noting how the glass improved his failing sight. After cleaning them and perching them back on his nose, he was surprised to find the huge iguana squatting beside him. It had slithered up

without a sound and now stared at him with doleful eyes.

What a stroke of luck, thought Sulak. Or was it luck? He had pictured the armada destroyed by a great storm and later the chair washed ashore. Now he had pictured oxen in his sleep, and found the island's largest creature upon waking: passive and apparently awaiting his needs. Perhaps his dreamtime had become something like the bottle glass: it focused his repressed powers into a clear force that could shape reality in the world about him.

Sulak untied a length of sisal he'd doubled around his waist as a belt. He tied a loop in one end of the rope and eased it over the iguana's neck. He was not surprised when it followed him on its tether.

At the chair, Sulak rested flat on his back while the iguana sat beside him. He sensed his old heart rebelling within his chest. Forcing himself to continue, he harnessed the iguana to both of the board runners and placed himself behind the chair. He pushed while the iguana pulled, with a plodding yet effective gait. The creature's long tail trailed underneath, swinging back and forth, slapping against the runners.

At last, the two plowed through the damp sand at the lagoon's mouth and stopped by the collapsed wall of the beach house. Sulak untethered the iguana, fed it some scraps of crab meat from his stores, and sent it scampering up the rocks to join a few of its comrades who were still sunning there.

The sun had now dropped low in the sky. Dark clouds were clustering in from the north. Anticipating another bad storm, Sulak did not rest. He tugged until the runners caught against the foundation of the hut. He unlashed the boards from the chair and began the twist and twist-back motions needed to inch it up onto the floor beneath the thatched roof. With a final shove he toppled it inside onto its back, and fell with it: exhausted, hurting in every joint.

As he lay half in and half out of the hut, aware that he had bruised his hip in the fall, Sulak stared blankly at the ceiling. His ordeal with the chair had now grown into an obsession. An obsession with many possible origins. The chair was his; he was now the Arch-Magus. Also, he belonged to the chair. The more he handled it, the more imperative it seemed to get it sheltered and cleaned up. And he had been wrong about the island; it was more than just a jumble of dirt and rock. It too was somehow involved; he was almost sure of it. The island, or at least the sleeping giant it housed, sensed that Sulak was near his end, and it too desired freedom from the spells that filled its very stone. Herculus had slept far too long.

Sulak ran this over and over in his mind until he could no longer comprehend any of it. He was weary to death of his exile, and weary beyond measure to exercise his powers again. Even if it were for the last time. The chair offered a chance, so it seemed, to be a Magus again. What mattered was the chair. It always came back to the chair.

A great pain stabbed through him as he pulled himself upright, but he ignored it. Whether he'd broken a rib or broken his whole body, he meant to sit in the seat that was rightfully his. He pushed the chair erect and collapsed into it as something inside him, some last defense, collapsed also. He drifted out of consciousness into a limbo of darkness and pulsing stars.





\* \* \*

Sulak dreamed one last time.

He dreamed that as the sun set behind the volcano, it peeked under the quickening storm for a long moment, spreading bloody fingers of light across the underbelly of the clouds. A breeze blew through the open hut and ruffled the tatters on Sulak's velvet coat. He awoke for a moment, or dreamed he did, and with his bare callused palms rubbed the slime and wet sand from the jewels set in the chair's arms. They glowed with appreciative warmth and seemed to draw him onward. His obsession had already linked him to the chair, for it was now familiar beneath his touch. As he tumbled down the long tunnel of unconsciousness once more, the old magician could feel himself falling through the atoms of the wood and into the cracked and folded bedrock below him. Set free, his expanding awareness spread through the island and linked with the strength of the repressed volcano. Then he felt his roots spread deeper along the veins of hot magma that carried to nearby islands, especially the island empire of the Magi Lords, his homeland of Myria.

Sulak now sensed more than saw how the coin he had found upon the beach had lied. He learned that he had been wrong again, just as he had been about Herculus, that magic had fled the world more swiftly than even he had imagined. The delicate skywalks of his native city, their air-spanning grace more the product of sorcery than architecture, had collapsed. The gardens of the high city grew wild from neglect. The indigent gathered to beg in the market squares, or skulked in alleys by night to await the unwary. Sulak searched through the devastated and

corrupt souls of his former countrymen for the evil emanations of Alcina. He discovered that the witch still lived, yet magic had deserted her also. He sensed how her flesh had aged more quickly because of the changes she had once wrought upon it, how it now hung from her bones in great ugly folds, how she dwelt in shadowy desolation in her ruined apartments where no curtain was ever drawn, no lamp ever lit. Sulak laughed and the magma bubbled in his veins.

Myria too possessed a slumbering giant, a deep caldera ready to burst at the seams as the ancient spells that held it in check continued to weaken. As Sulak's consciousness spread thinner and thinner, his reawakened powers linked through the chair to Herculus, and then from Herculus to the other islands. He realized he was losing touch with his physical body and that his old nemesis, the boa, had found him exposed in the open hut and wrapped herself around the worn husk that now slumped in the chair of the Arch-Magus.

Sulak was passing from life. His last act was to summon all of the magics from the linked network through which his being now flowed: the chair, the spell upon Herculus, even the ancient chains binding vulcanism on the other islands.

The people of Myria had unjustly branded him a traitor. Borgus and the other Magi Lords had cursed him into oblivion. As Sulak died, as the boa's stricture pressed the last wisps of breath from his body, he claimed that brand and returned that curse in kind. Across the storm-darkened sea, the fury of the earth rumbled beneath the homeland streets where once he might have ruled. Ω

(continued from page 6)

budding Adept. The Create Familiar/Create Mandala complex most certainly is not just a basic spell.

Enchantments of all sorts are an important point, indeed; bravo to Mr. DeWolfe for pointing this out. But Spell and Magic Points Matrices are much more important for a sorcerer than using Bindings. Spell Matrices allow sorcerers to use their spells at high Intensity, Range, and Duration, and even Multispell, at minimal cost to his Free INT. Magic Points Matrices provide Power, and Ceremony rituals and time can increase the chances of a critical spell-casting, which really saves on the magic points.

But spirits are for shamans. A magician must rely on his *own* abilities and resources; he doesn't need help, not even from captive other world entities.

One point: If an Adept wants to live long enough to become a Magus, he doesn't enter combat, not with all the Damage Boostings in the universe to help him. He gives those spells to barbarians with more cash than sense. Any mage worth his philosophical salt wouldn't sully his hands with the blood of idiots. If he's threat-

ened by swordsmen, he retreats 10 kilometres and waits for the barbarians to make their triumphal parade through town. Then he can Dominate one or two of them, and he sends them rampaging berserk through the people. The killers are then taken away and hanged . . . but that's not the magician's problem. *Combat is for other people.*

Magicians who adventure this way are not cowards and not lazy. These are your world's equivalents of the Ghostbusters; whenever needed, they'll be right in the front line, the first to say "Back off man! We're professionals!" And they'll mean it. Gods help Eric Bloodblade the Heavy if he's standing between Ferdy the Thaumaturge and his library! Ferdy, his face sternly determined, wouldn't slow down over Eric's amphibian corpse!

Finally, the way that some magicians use their spells is, quite frankly, ludicrous. Lightning blasts from flashing fingers! Puffs of smoke! Rabbits from hats! *Pfauh!* A true magician relies on subtlety of technique, but when that approach fails, he shows no mercy at all. As an example, in a game session I once played, a dimwitted NPC challenged my character to a

duel, one to one. My character looked at him, snapped his fingers (I rolled good dice), then looked around at the challenger's friends, who were watching the pretty new lilac bush grow where once a human had stood. He just said, "Challenge accepted. Anyone for any more?" That action proved sufficient for the NPCs to give my character a wide berth thereafter.

In summary, the way that sorcerers are roleplayed radically differs from other characters. Sorcerers are heavy people, and they know it, too. Whether the sorcerers are good, bad, or indifferent, those who aren't sorcerers tend to learn to treat them the way you'd treat football players: with great respect. Magicians' reputations have to be maintained, you know.

Mr. DeWolfe's article, I feel, has been otherwise useful to those players who wish to contemplate using sorcerer characters in any FRPG, not just RQ3. To finish, just remember the last words of Dorothy of Kansas: "Why, Toto, he ain't no wizard! He's just an ordinary — Ribbet! Ribbet!"

Alexander Thomas Greene  
Clwyd, N. Wales

Ω

# Arcane Lore

## One charge is never quite enough

The AD&D® game manages to cover everything one needs to know about rods, staves, and wands — well, almost everything. There are very few rules or guidelines on how to recharge these items. This is usually not a problem, but when players find out how much easier it is to recharge a *wand of fire* than it is to fabricate a new one, things can get difficult. The purpose of this article, then, is to provide a new spell for charging and recharging magical wandlike items. As a general note, the term “wands” is used in this article to describe any and all rechargeable rods, staves, and wands.

In some cases, the DM might assume that the enchantments put on a particular wand allow it to be recharged simply by casting the spell that resembles its spell-like functions. This might seem to adequately solve the problem for all wands,

but there are two major flaws in this method. First, a magic-user could easily afford to charge wands between adventures, making the whole process an all-too-common exercise. Second, if a wand can absorb a spell as a charge rather than being affected by it, wouldn't a character be able to hold the word in front of him to absorb spells cast at him? Certainly, this method of recharging wands would seriously imbalance the game.

Much of this trouble is eliminated by adding a new magic-user/illusionist spell: recharge. If this spell is not available, magic-users and illusionists can still use the spells *limited wish*, *alter reality*, and *wish* to recharge magical wands. Each spell is capable of adding a variable number of charges to a limit of one charge per two levels of the spell-caster's ability.

Clerics can recharge wands through

offerings, deeds, and prayers to their deities. The amount of service and expense required must be determined by the DM, as different deities expect different tithes due to their different spheres of control. The amount of service and expense also depends on how many charges the cleric asks to be restored. The DM should make this interesting, and it should fit in with the deity's personality. If the wand is used for things that are deemed offensive by the deity, the deity may require a greater amount of service or even refuse to recharge the wand at all. As a final note, don't forget that any rod, staff, or wand disintegrates once it has been totally depleted of charges.

**Recharge** (Conjuration/Summoning)  
Level: MU 4/IL 6 Components: V,S,M  
Range: Touch CT: 6 turns  
AE: 1 wand, staff, ST: None  
or rod

Duration: 1 turn + 1 round/level  
Explanation/Description: This spell acts as a funnel that draws upon spells to charge rods, staves, and wands that have spell-like powers. Throughout the duration of this spell, the spells that are cast at the wand are absorbed as charges rather than affecting the wand. For each spell cast, the wand regains a number of charges equal to the number of charges it takes to employ that power through the wand. The wand in question must be held by the spell-caster casting the *recharge*

### Spells Used in Recharging Wands, Staves, and Rods for Magic-Users and Illusionists

Item	Spells used to recharge
Rod of beguiling	Charm monster, charm person
Staff of command	Charm monster charm person, friends (½ charge), suggestion
Staff of power	Cone of cold, continual darkness, continual light, fireball, globe of invulnerability (2 charges), hold monster (2 charges), hold person, levitate, lightning bolt, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield (½ charge).
Staff of striking	Special <sup>1</sup>
Wand of conjuration	Continual darkness (½ charge), monster summoning*, prismatic sphere (7 charges), unseen servant.
Wand of enemy detection	Detect evil, detect good, detect invisibility <sup>3</sup> , ESP know alignment
Wand of fear	Fear <sup>3</sup>
Wand of fire	Burning hands, fireball (2 charges), pyrotechnics, wall of fire (2 charges)
Wand of frost	Cone of cold (2 charges), ice storm, wall of ice
Wand of illumination	Continual light (2 charges) <sup>3</sup> , dancing lights <sup>3</sup> , light <sup>3</sup>
Wand of illusion	Audible glamor <sup>3</sup> , phantasmal force <sup>3</sup>
Wand of lightning	Shocking grasp, lightning bolt (2 charges)
Wand of magic detection	Detect magic <sup>3</sup>
Wand of metal and mineral detection	Locate object <sup>3</sup>
Wand of magic missiles	Magic missile <sup>3</sup>
Wand of paralyzation	Hold monster (2 charges), hold person
Wand of polymorphing	Polymorph other, polymorph any object (2 charges)
Wand of secret door and trap location	Locate object <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This staff is recharged by magic-users using the *enchanted weapon* spell, which restores one charge to the item for every two levels of experience of the caster. Illusionists must use an *alter reality* spell.

<sup>2</sup> This spell restores one charge for each level of the summoning spell.

<sup>3</sup> This spell may be cast by illusionists, either as an illusionist spell or using the seventh-level illusionist spell *first-level magic-user spells*, if applicable.

<sup>4</sup> This wand can be recharged by illusionists only by using an *alter reality* spell.





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spell and the subsequent charging spells. Those wands that cannot be recharged are not affected by this spell.

Note that illusionists cannot recharge wands that they cannot use (see the *Players Handbook*, page 26, and note the wands usable by "any" class in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 122). Wands that can also be used by clerics or druids must be recharged using other means, as described earlier in this article.

A spell that does not resemble one of the powers of the wand is not absorbed. Instead, it affects the wand and dispels the *recharge* spell. Similarly, if the wand is recharged up to the point where the number of charges currently in the item is greater than the original number of charges, the spell also affects the wand and dispels the *recharge* spell. The sole exception to this case comes in overcharging a *staff of power*, which explodes in the same manner as if a retributive strike was made by that staff. Spells cannot be placed into the wand by anyone other than the spell-caster holding the wand and casting the *recharge* spell; such spells affect the wand (and everyone nearby) and dispel the *recharge* spell.

Fortunately, each time this spell is cast over a wand, the caster gains a relative idea of how many charges may be placed within the wand before it is fully charged. Roll 1d6. On a roll of 1-2, the spell-caster believes the actual number of charges the wand can still receive is 1-4 below the actual number. On a roll of 3-4, the spell-caster knows the exact number of charges that can still be added. On a roll of 5-6, the spell-caster believes the number of charges that can be added is 1-4 above the actual number (the most dangerous situation, of course).

The material components of this spell are a cubic inch of the basic material from which the wand was fabricated (iron, silver, oak, etc.) and a sapphire through which the spell is focused. The command word of the wand must also be known in order to cast this spell. Of course, material components needed for casting the spells to fill the wand must also be on hand.

In order to avoid confusion when using this spell, a table of the rods, staves, and wands from the *DMG* that may be recharged, and the spells that recharge them, is provided. Note that the *recharge* spell turns spells into "charge energy"; the spells are not stored in the wand as actual spells. Thus, if a player casts five *fireball* spells to charge a *wand of fire*, he has added 10 charges to the wand, not 10 charges that can only be discharged as *fireballs* from the wand.

Since many of the wands can be recharged by more than one spell, magic-users will probably want to recharge wands with spells having the lowest level or the shortest duration. They also might want to use extra spells from scrolls, *rings of spell storing*, *Rary's mnemonic enhancer*, and similar spell sources. □

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# DAILY PLANET™

## GAMING SUPPLEMENT

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August, 1988

Number 13

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## PLASTIC MAN™

Plastic Man alias "Eel" O'Brien™

DEX:	10	STR:	5	BOU:	8
INT:	4	WIL:	6	MIND:	9
INFL:	5	AURA:	4	SPIRIT:	6
INITIATIVE:	19 (24)	HP:	40		

### Powers:

Stretching: 15  
Dumb Luck: 6  
Shape Change: 8

### Skills:

Detective: 5  
Martial Artist: 5  
Thief: 10  
Spy: 8

### Limitations:

Always retains red-and-gold costume motif in whatever shape he changes into.

Shape Change is not limited to animals only, but can be used to duplicate any object that Plas™ can imagine. He frequently uses his power to disguise himself as an ordinary object such as an umbrella, an automobile tire, or a beach ball. He retains his elasticity in any form.

### Connections:

Federal Bureau of Investigation (High)  
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Freedom Fighters™ (High)

### Motivation:

Thrill of Adventure

### Wealth:

Comfortable

### Race:

Human

### Background:

Eel O'Brien was the top safe cracker in the country during the days just prior to World War II. Not allying himself to any one gang, he preferred to rent out his criminal services to the highest bidder. On one of these jobs, he helped to rob the Crawford Chemical Works, but the gang was surprised by a security guard. O'Brien was shot and knocked into a vat of unknown acid, some of which entered his bloodstream through the wound. The gang deserted him, and he was forced to flee on foot into the hills, finally losing consciousness.

When O'Brien awoke, he was surprised to find himself in a monastery called Rest Haven™, where his wound had been treated and bandaged. Even more startling, however, was his discovery that the acid in his body had somehow given him the power to stretch his body into any length or shape he desired. At first he planned to use his newfound abilities for crime, but then he learned that the monks had turned away police that were searching for him because they believed O'Brien had the capacity to become a good man.

O'Brien changed his mind and decided that he would fight crime instead of perpetrating it. Adopting the identity of Plastic Man, his first task was to bring to justice the very gang which had deserted him at the chemical factory.

Plastic Man enjoyed a string of successes against criminals, both as a solo operator and in tandem with a partner, the bumbling but well-meaning Woogy Winks™. Plas eventually came to the attention of the federal authorities. At the behest of top government officials, Plas became a highly placed FBI agent. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, President Roosevelt asked Plas to become the official government liaison to the newly formed All-Star Squadron. Plas served in that capacity for some time, then later joined Uncle Sam's™ splinter group known as the Freedom Fighters™. After the war, Plas became a secret agent again, this time for the National Bureau of Investigation, Woogy Winks worked closely with him, trying to become an N.B.I. agent as well.

Plastic Man's current activities and whereabouts are unknown, presumably kept classified by the N.B.I.

## CHECKLIST:



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# SAGE ADVICE

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by Skip Williams

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If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom.

And now, we present everything (we hope) that you've ever wanted to know about player characters in the AD&D® game. These questions are primarily organized according to the classes involved, not races; class combinations are dealt with in their own section. Additional commentary was provided by David "Zeb" Cook and Jon Pickens, who are currently working on the second-edition AD&D game rules, and by Roger E. Moore.

## Barbarians

**Can a barbarian character build a stronghold?**

Yes, if the character can afford it. However, the barbarian does not attract any followers when he builds the stronghold. He must hire them (see next question).

**Can a barbarian hire men-at-arms to garrison a stronghold or for any other reason? How does charisma affect hiring men-at-arms? Does the barbarian's charisma bonus apply?**

Any character — except rangers of less than 8th level — can hire men-at-arms. These are employees who are loyal only as long as they are paid. The character's purse, not his charisma or comeliness, governs how many men-at-arms he can hire. The character's alignment, kindness, and generosity, however, will affect men-at-arms' morale in a tight spot, as will charisma and other considerations; see the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, pages 36-37 and 67 — or DRAGON issue #119, pages 54-58 ("Henchmen and Hirelings," by Charles Olsen) — for details. A barbarian's charisma adjustment will only be helpful if the men-at-arms are also barbarians.

**How exactly do barbarians summon hordes? Does a horde simply appear at the snap of the fingers? Is the number generated using the**

**summoner's experience points fixed, or does it vary? Are there shamans in the horde? How many? How long does it take to gather the horde?**

The *Unearthed Arcana* (pages 20-21) answers most of these questions. A barbarian character simply returns to his home territory and summons the horde. The exact summoning procedure is abstract and varies according to the type of barbarians involved. This might include beating drums (for barbarians with long-distance signaling) or sending messengers (for those with running or horsemanship). The horde takes one week or more to gather together. The exact number of barbarians summoned is directly dependent on the character's experience, which serves as a measure of the barbarian's fame within the tribe. Whether or not shamans are in the horde (and how many of them appear) depends on the type of barbarians and the size of the horde; see the *Monster Manual*, pages 66-69, for examples. The role-playing of this event could be made extremely intense and memorable.

**Could a barbarian use magical chain mail and still receive his full dexterity bonus (+2 for each point of dexterity over 14) to armor class?**

No. Chain mail is fairly bulky even when magical, and thus negates the barbarian's full bonus (see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 18). A barbarian could wear elfin chain mail, however, and get the full bonus, as this type of chain mail is not bulky. Of course, DMs might wish to restrict or ban this if it will produce an overly powerful barbarian.

**Is there a limit to how many times a barbarian can apply first aid?**

Some campaigns allow barbarians to administer first aid each time a character receives a new wound, but each wound may only be treated once. If the PC has received several wounds, only the last one sustained may be treated with first aid.

## Bards

**What attack table does a bard use?**

A bard fights at the highest level that he attained as a fighter (see the *Players Handbook*, page 118).

**How many bonus hit points would a bard with an 18 constitution get?**

Only fighters and cavaliers can get more than +2 points per die from constitution bonuses. The character in your example would get +4 to each die gained as a fighter, but only +2 for any other hit dice gained — including the six-sided die gained at each bard level. Be warned that, as designed, high-level bards with high constitutions have excessive numbers of hit points, and DMs should consider this with regards to restricting the class.

**Which of the druidic special abilities do bards gain?**

According to the rules, all of them (see the *Players Handbook*, page 118); once the character actually gains bard status, he is treated as a druid of the same level. Bards of the 3rd level can identify plants, animals, and pure water and can pass through undergrowth. Those of 7th level are immune to *charm* spells cast by woodland creatures and, technically, can change forms. DMs who are interested in preserving game balance, however, should consider dropping the latter ability. The damage-restoring property of the form changing ability can be a real campaign buster when applied to a bard already high hit points. DMs concerned about campaign balance may consider restricting druidic special abilities for bards.

**Can a prospective bard take thief-acrobat training as long as he leaves off being a thief when reaching 8th level?**

The thief-acrobat class is not an option for prospective bards.

## Cavaliers & paladins

**Do cavaliers go berserk in combat?**

Cavaliers (including paladins) don't normally go berserk in combat unless affected by some magic. They are, however, difficult to control in melee (see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 16).

**Do cavaliers and paladins get 12-sided or 10-sided hit dice?**

All cavaliers — including paladins — use 10-sided hit dice. The 12-sided listing in *Unearthed Arcana* (page 15) is an error.

**Are cavaliers immune to a dragon's fear aura?**

Yes, they are immune to all types of *fear*.

**Cavaliers and paladins can increase intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, and constitution as well as strength. How do the percentage scores of abilities other than strength affect play?**

Cavaliers and paladins may *not* increase intelligence or wisdom, just strength, dexterity, and constitution. Paladins may also increase their charisma. Page 15 of

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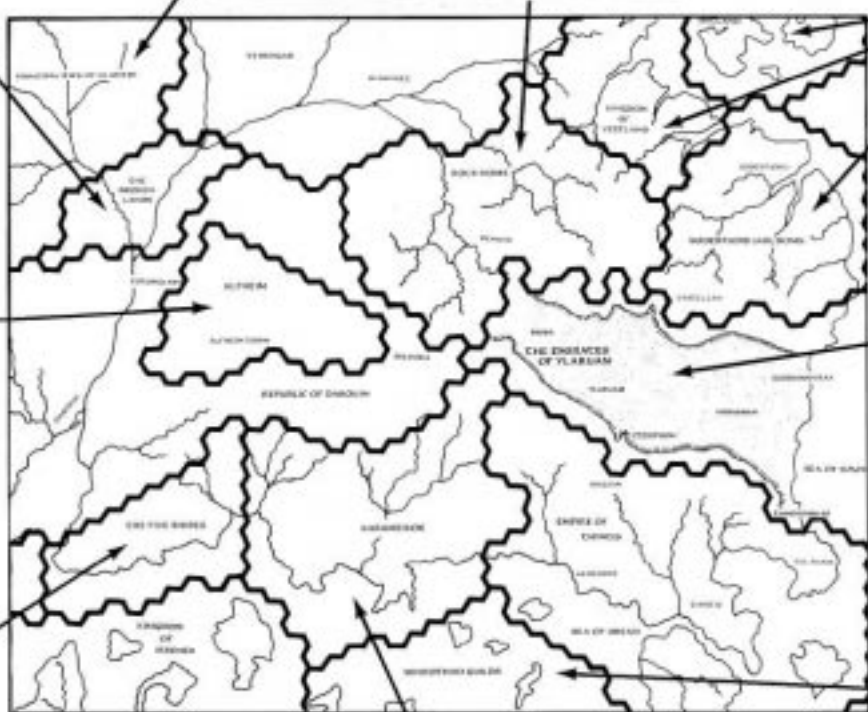


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*Unearthed Arcana* (second column, fifth complete paragraph, last two lines) clearly states that the percentage score does not affect play, except for strength.

### **Is it acceptable for paladin characters to drink alcoholic beverages?**

Whether or not paladins may consume alcohol is up to the DM. In making such a decision, the DM should consider the beliefs and general tendencies of the paladin's religion. It is also helpful to keep in mind that the only beverages which could not be infected or spoiled in the Middle Ages were alcoholic; the only major teetotaling culture in the world at the time was the Islamic Middle East. Balance this with an understanding of the obvious effects of overindulgence, of course; lack of moderation was the offense that most concerned real-world medieval society.

### **What happens when paladins lose their exalted status? Do they become cavaliers or just fighters?**

"Fallen" paladins do become cavaliers, but probably disgraced ones, regardless of their alignment.

### **Can high-level paladins use clerical magic items?**

No, not unless the clerical item's description specifically says that a paladin or noncleric may use it. This holds true even for paladins who can cast clerical spells.

### **What should a paladin character do when he captures an evil opponent? Let's say that a hill giant (encountered in its lair on a wilderness adventure) surrenders to the paladin, expecting mercy; can the paladin kill it?**

A careful reading of the alignment sections of the *Players Handbook* (pages 33-34) and the *DMG* (pages 23-25) should be helpful here. In your example, any of several actions are justifiable in terms of the lawful-good alignment — if the DM sees them that way:

1. The captive giant could be killed immediately if it had committed great crimes and represented a threat to the community at large. Conversely, this could be construed as a neutral-evil act in which the strong dominate the weak and ignore mercy.

2. The captive giant could be released if it has committed no crimes, and if allowed to live may remember this kindness and become a useful member of society. Conversely, this can be construed as a chaotic act in which the rights of the individual are held higher than the welfare of the community at large.

3. The captive giant could be kept prisoner and either forced to work in a manner that would contribute to the common weal, or it could be educated in the hopes that it will change its alignment and become good. Conversely, this can be construed as a lawful-evil act in which a

creature is forced to serve the prevailing order and conform to another's interpretation of what is right.

An aside: Is this option actually slavery? Slavery was, historically speaking, not always considered evil. Prisoners of war, whether civilian or military, were enslaved to make them useful and to avoid killing them in the society of the victorious nation. However, deliberate raiding for slaves is evil, and their treatment can easily become evil in any slave-owning society. If the paladin in the example meant to force all hill giants to serve humanity, then this would be slavery. The DM must think his way through considerable cultural relativism on this topic, but it is recommended in the AD&D game that slavery be considered an evil act. In this event, prisoners convicted of evil deeds and sentenced to hard labor cannot be considered slaves.

4. The captive giant could be forced to swear an oath to behave itself and work for the common good of humanity (or, at worst, to leave humanity alone). This could also be held to be a chaotic act if the giant's trustworthiness is questionable.

Obviously, the paladin must do *something* with the giant. Ultimately, it is up to the paladin's player to decide what should be done, and up to the DM to decide if the character's motives were pure or otherwise. It is strongly suggested that the player and DM take a short halt in the game to discuss this, so the PC isn't unfairly penalized for his actions.

### **Can paladins detect the evil in all evil-aligned characters?**

The paladin's *detect evil* ability is like a *detect evil* spell, not a *know alignment* spell. Thus, it can detect the presence of evil alignment in other characters (see the spell description in the *Players Handbook*, page 44) and can even detect the degree, nature, and other alignment components, as per the *DMG*, page 41.

### **Will a paladin's immunity to disease protect him from the touch of a mummy, a harm or cause disease spell, lycanthropy, or green slime?**

The paladin's immunity extends to "all forms of disease" (*Players Handbook*, page 22), so (by implication) any disease or condition that is cured by a *cure disease* spell cannot be caught by a paladin. Lycanthropy, however, may be considered a special case, as a *cure disease* or *remove curse* from a 12th-level cleric is required (*DMG*, page 22), so this condition is as much a magical curse as a disease. A previous rules question in *POLYHEDRON™* Newszine noted that lycanthropy *could* be caught by paladins for this reason, so this ruling shall stand.

Of course, this still leaves an enormous number of things to which paladins are immune: normal infections, diseases from mummies, the effects of numerous monster plants (green slime, violet fungi, etc.)

— i.e., anything that can be cured by the application of a *cure disease* spell alone. Note that the effects of yellow mold cannot be overcome in this manner, as the *cure disease* is applied after the PC's death and in conjunction with another spell. Some campaigns may restrict the effects of a paladin's disease immunity to those diseases not contracted by magical means or from monsters, however.

## **Clerics & druids**

### **Why don't clerics have any missile weapons? Couldn't they use blunt arrows?**

Clerics now have several missile weapons available to them; see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 13. Arrows, blunt-tipped or not, are officially off-limits to clerics in the AD&D game.

### **Can neutral clerics turn or control undead?**

Some campaigns may allow neutral clerics to control undead whose alignment matches the nonneutral component of the cleric's alignment, turning all others (e.g., a chaotic-neutral cleric could control chaotic undead and could turn others). If the cleric has a true-neutral alignment, then only true-neutral undead are controlled; all others are turned.

### **Can druids turn undead? How about neutral-good ranger/druids and nonneutral druids of other races?**

No on all counts. Undead turning is not a druidic ability.

### **Will a druid who shape changes into another form burst out of his equipment as if he were a lycanthrope, or does his equipment change with him as in polymorph self spells?**

The druids equipment changes along with him, so none of it is destroyed.

### **Can a druid change form into a giant version of a normal animal as long as the new form is within the weight restriction?**

Interpreting the rules strictly, druids are limited to the shapes of animals whose *normal* forms are within the weight limits. Some DMs, however, allow changes to any animal form, in sizes up to the weight limit. How you do it doesn't really matter, as long as you are consistent. Some DMs may limit druids to the use of animal types that the druids have actually seen or that naturally occur in the druids locale.

### **Can a druid change shape into a magical mammal, fish, or reptile, like a unicorn or pseudo-dragon?**

No, he can change shape only into normal, nonmagical animals.



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# The Golem's Craft

*Want to build  
a golem?*

*It isn't easy . . . .*

*From an article by Oriel of Arborgate in The Quill Arcane (vol. 641), the journal of the Mages' Guild at Menwyn:*

The construction of golems is a mysterious and difficult process, the more so since the principles involved are usable by clerical spell-casters as well as by members of our own Guild and profession. Further, history relates that some mages — notably Guardian of Menwyn and the notorious Iriana al-Iskir — have succeeded in creating golems prior to attaining the levels of mastery usually required for casting the necessary spells. This treatise attempts to gather in one place all that is known about golem-craft and to answer some of the persistent questions surrounding the art.

We will first discuss the so-called "lesser golems" created by clerics through the use of a single spell — called, appropriately enough, *golem*. While such golems are far less costly to build than those of the greater sort, this ease of golem-making is offset by the lesser golem's sharply limited lifespan. (However, since many lesser golems are apparently crafted expressly for combat, their average lifespan is often far shorter than the maximum allowed them anyway.)

In most cases, a cleric's cost to craft a lesser golem will not exceed 1,000 gp (see Table 1) and will often be much less. It was once believed that only the cleric could fashion the creature's form, but a case is now recorded in which an expert craftsman was retained to carve a wood golem. This practice is believed to drastically reduce the time needed for construction, but doubtless it increases the cost greatly.

Lesser golems are much easier for opponents to "kill" than the greater variety, but they are known to be subject to the same danger from possession by evil spirits as the more powerful clay golem. Newly unearthed scrolls left by a former Gray



Illustration by Valerie Valusek

Vizier of Alexor's Onyx Temple recount a battle in which a possessed leather golem turned on its creator: "It thrashed out like a wild beast, and its form glowed with the frenzy of the demonic mind within. My acolytes were wounded more severely than I believed possible." This suggests that such golems will always attack at peak efficiency and are notably harder to

destroy than nonpossessed types (see Table 1). It also raises an intriguing question — are such golems, unlike the normal unintelligent sort, vulnerable to mind-affecting magic? No answer is known, and no cleric has volunteered to cooperate in experiments to seek one.<sup>1</sup>

Something of the same reticence extends to a minor riddle surrounding the more

powerful clay golem, also a clerical creation. Logic suggests that any cleric able to cast a resurrection spell should be able to fashion a clay golem, but only those who are thoroughly familiar with the spell and are able to gain the spell by prayer are known to have succeeded in doing so without the aid of a manual.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the mysteries surrounding the various magically created greater golems — those of flesh, iron, and stone, and the peculiar “pillar golem” known to scholars as the caryatid column — are more serious. The most persistent puzzle concerns the apparently insufficient magical powers of some of their creators, as in the case of Quardian and Iriana. A second set of questions is raised by the rare manuals which enable relatively inexperienced mages to craft fully powered golems, and a third concerns the building of pillar golems, where the few generally accepted scraps of wisdom fail to mesh with practical reality.

The Greater Arcanum states that a *wish* and a *polymorph any object* spell (among others) are needed to fashion any magical greater golem, save when manuals are used. Yet by her own apprentice’s testimony, Iriana al-Iskir lacked the mastery to cast either spell when she built the flesh golem commissioned during the reign of Kethyl the Greedy in Genwold, and the student’s notes make no mention of a manual. Less is known of Quardian’s stone golem, but authorities agree that the mage could not have cast a *wish* until a full decade after the golem was made.

Two explanations spring to mind to account for these seeming contradictions, but neither is entirely satisfying. The first, of course, is the possible use of scroll spells in one or both cases, since magicked scrolls do allow access to spells beyond a mage’s usual level of mastery. Such spell use carries a risk, however, and while the scroll theory is quite reasonable in Iriana’s case, Quardian is known to have been almost fanatically cautious and thus unlikely to have relied on scrolls. (It is also worth noting that fewer than eight *wish* scrolls have been reported to exist on this continent since the Colonization, some seven centuries past.)

The second possibility involves the use of device-generated spell effects, as (for example) with a *ring of wishes*. Though neither of the mages mentioned is known to have possessed such objects, their histories are far from fully documented and the idea cannot be ruled out. Yet while this idea easily accounts for the needed *wish* spell, no known magical device generates the *polymorph any object* enchantment.

Recent experiments by this writer suggest that a third answer may be more accurate. Both *wish* and *polymorph any object* derive much of their difficulty from the breadth of power available to the mage casting them. Conclusive results have yet to be obtained, but research shows that narrowly defined versions of

these spells, specifically designed for the crafting of golems, may in fact require a lower degree of mastery than is normally the case. (Care should be taken to note that the narrow version of *wish* is not equivalent to the well-known *limited wish* spell. The level of energy released is different and must be precisely focused in the golem-crafting application.)<sup>3</sup>

We may now turn to the use of enchantment manuals as a means of crafting golems. While they are quite rare, such books are eagerly sought by those not yet able to create golems through normal spell use. Besides containing specific incantations and instructions for shaping the creatures themselves, those tomes offer advice on the use and control of the finished golems. Present-day mages have tried to write these manuals, but all have failed; one scribe believes the reason concerns the books’ physical composition. “Close study,” he writes, “reveals the manuals to be imbued with minute particles of iron, stone, or whatever else is to be used in the golem’s construction. It therefore seems that the books may be distillations of finished golems, or at least that golem fragments were used in making their bindings and parchment.”

An odd aspect of using manuals is that, contrary to expectations, they do not make the process shorter or less costly. In fact, the opposite usually occurs, as eager mages pour more time and effort into book-aided golems than their elders spend creating golems via spells. It is uncertain whether the added time and cost are a function of inexperience or a condition inherent in the use of the manuals (see Table 2).

It is important to realize that, while manuals eliminate much of the trial and error of golem construction, they do not notably affect the most difficult aspect of the process — that of fashioning the golem’s body. Each sort of golem must be

**Table 1**  
**Lesser Golems**

Type	Cost to construct (gp)*	XP value *
Straw	250	110
Rope	500	220
Leather	750	440
Wood	1,000	880

\* If an expert craftsman is employed, cost is doubled but construction time is cut in half. This figure includes the cost of top-quality materials (note that straw golems require clothing which must be stuffed, as with a scarecrow) and necessary herbal powders which enable the animation to take place.

\*\* In the case of golems which have been possessed, all attacks which hit will do maximum damage, and the experience awarded should be 1½ to 2 times normal.

shaped in painstaking detail, whether animation is achieved through spells or a manual. It is this crafting that in most cases makes up the enormous expense involved in creating one of the creatures. The techniques required for shaping each sort of golem are discussed briefly below.

Like lesser golems, clay golems are often constructed by the clerics themselves rather than by expert craftsmen. This can add significantly to the cost of such a project, since not many clerics are skilled artisans; Mordecai Novelir, a noted Southpool curate several generations past, is known to have made six unsuccessful starts before finally completing a satisfactory clay statue in his seventh attempt. As each figure requires between 300 and 700 lb. of fine clay (which cannot be “recycled” if the fashioning goes ill), this is no small matter. Moreover, the finished statue must be kiln-fired and treated with a special glaze, whose composition is integral to the eventual animation of the golem. It is no surprise, therefore, that many clerics commission golem-statues from experts, insuring prompt completion of a quality figure.<sup>4</sup>

Though flesh golems are arguably the easiest of all greater golems to craft, few respectable mages will discuss the creatures or take part in their construction. This is undoubtedly due to the unsavory nature of the materials needed — large, muscular human or humanoid body parts. (For unknown reasons, a flesh golem cannot be made from a single intact corpse. All such efforts have resulted either in total failure or the creation of

**Table 2**  
**Greater Golems**

	Cost in gp/Months	
	standard	with manual*
Pillar	30,000/4	80,000/6 * *
Flesh	40,000/1	50,000/2
Clay***	50,000/½	65,000/1
Stone	60,000/2	80,000/3
Iron	80,000/3	100,000/4

\* Except for the pillar golem (caryatid column) information, this data is taken from the DMG. However, since the chief purpose of adding expense and time to the process of creating golems with manuals seems to be to deter low-level spell-casters, DMs may elect to use the “standard” costs for any golem built by a character able to do so without a manual, even when a manual is used. (Reduction in time required would still apply in the case of a manual of caryatid columns.)

\*\* As noted in the text, the manual of caryatid columns allows creation of two such creatures.

\*\*\* Statistics given are for clerics who personally shape the golem and are successful on the first attempt. See note 4 in the text for additional information.



weaker, short-lived zombies not worth the time and energy.) These body parts must be sought out and carefully matched in order to produce a powerful composite form. Once the parts are sewn together with fine adamantite wire, the body must be treated with a powerful preservative ointment before the final spell-casting may occur. Accounts differ as to whether the *strength* and *protection from normal missiles* spells should be applied to the ointment or to the treated proto-golem.<sup>5</sup>

Stone golems, though rather expensive to construct, are perhaps the most often encountered sort because little tends to go wrong in their crafting. Most mages hire seasoned sculptors to undertake the actual carving, which is most often done in granite, though basalt is also quite acceptable. There is a report from deep in the Gnome-teeth of a stone golem formed entirely of polished obsidian, but the party encountering it was lost and badly malnourished at the time, making their account questionable at best. Still, there is no reason to discount the possibility in theory — a stone golem's magic, after all, arises from the sapphire which must be set somewhere on its body (to act as a focus for the *slow* magic) and the specially prepared powder which is sprinkled over its form during the animation process.

Given the comparative ease with which stone golems can be built, it is something of a wonder that the iron golem was invented at all, for these monstrous guardians are exceptionally complex to create. Not only must an expert armorer forge the golem's shell and assemble it with the detailed hinges and joints which allow the figure to move, a functioning device involving a pump and bellows must be created to fit inside the golem in order to generate the poison gas effect associated with these creatures. (Worse still, the aspiring mage cannot commission any noted dwarven ironworkers for the task, as the dwarven antipathy to magic has caused all statues from their forges to reject the animation spells.) Only the immense power of the completed golem inspires mages to persist in replicating the original iron golem known to us, found in an empty treasure vault in northern River-march shortly after the Colonization.

One unusual type of golem remains to be discussed, but it is due only to remarkable good luck that clear information on the pillar golem (caryatid column) is available. While exploring an abandoned tower in Rathlake last year, the elven scholar Kirias Evrion and his companions discovered a manual intended to aid the building of these warriors, now definitely known to be related to stone golems though quite different in ability. Two major surprises were immediately discerned: the *manual of caryatid columns* described the fashioning of a matched pair rather than a single creature, and the listed cost for their construction was far less than had been commonly believed.<sup>6</sup> The manual also

confirmed that, like other golems, caryatids are immune to mind-affecting spells such as *sleep* and *fear*, but indicated their possible vulnerability to more sorts of magic than is usual for golem-kind.<sup>7</sup> In fact, despite its durability and relatively high cost, the pillar golem seem more closely related in some way to the lesser golems than to its stone cousin.<sup>8</sup>

The construction of any golem, of course, involves a significant commitment of resources, time, and energy, and is not to be undertaken without careful study and research. It is hoped that this compilation may help those mages or clerics who are considering such a project to reduce the uncertainties which have often accompanied the fashioning of golems.

### Footnotes

1. While a possessed golem certainly has a mind potentially susceptible to magic, that mind is also of demonic origin and is likely to have a degree of magic resistance. DMs should determine individual specifics of intelligence and magic resistance levels, but a possible rule of thumb would be to apply physical spell attacks (*fireball*, etc.) to the golem's physical form, while assigning the possessing spirit a base 20% magic resistance to mental attacks (plus appropriate saving throws, of course). As with the clay golem, possession is assumed to occur on a 1% cumulative chance per round in which the golem is involved in melee, and the spirit possessing the golem will be chaotic evil in alignment. All nearby living things are subject to attack, starting with the nearest beings. Only the destruction of the lesser golem will end the attacks. See Table 1 for combat notes.

2. According to the *Players Handbook*, clerics may cast all the needed spells upon attaining 16th level. However, given the progression described in the *golem* spell in *Unearthed Arcana*, it is recommended that DMs retain the *Monster Manual* rule which states that clerics must be at least 17th level to craft a clay golem.

3. This discussion centers on the *Monster Manual's* establishment of two seemingly contradictory rules for would-be golem builders: 14th- and 16th-level mages may craft flesh and stone golems respectively, but must use an eighth-level spell (attainable at 16th level) and a ninth-level spell (gained at 18th level) in order to do so. To resolve the paradox, three suggestions are offered: a) permit the use of *wishes* from devices in golem construction, b) waive the normal chance of spell failure when scrolls are used to provide the two needed spells for this specific purpose, or c) adopt the limited-purpose spells postulated previously. These spells, perhaps labeled as *golem wish* and *polymorph golem*, would be identical in all respects to their higher-level counterparts, but would be treated as 7th-level spells useable only for creating golems and would have to be especially researched, found, or copied. DMs may develop fur-

ther refinements to this concept, but are cautioned against rule changes that make golem-building easier for PCs.

4. The cost and time figures for clay golems listed in Table 2 are for those shaped by the cleric personally, but do not allow for a failed attempt at sculpture. DMs might assign a base chance of success of 75% to the cleric's sculpting (with appropriate modifiers for secondary skills and dexterity), assessing an extra 10,000 gp and a weeks work time each time a new effort is begun. Hiring an expert craftsman adds 20,000 gp to the initial cost but assures an acceptable statue on the first try (with a 1-5% failure chance at worst).

5. It is suggested that only evil (or at least non-good) mages be permitted to craft flesh golems for the reasons described. Note also that most player characters should object to the use of player-character remains as golem parts if some mage proposes it. This does not preclude the possibility that an NPC mage might covet a living PC's anatomy for such a project.

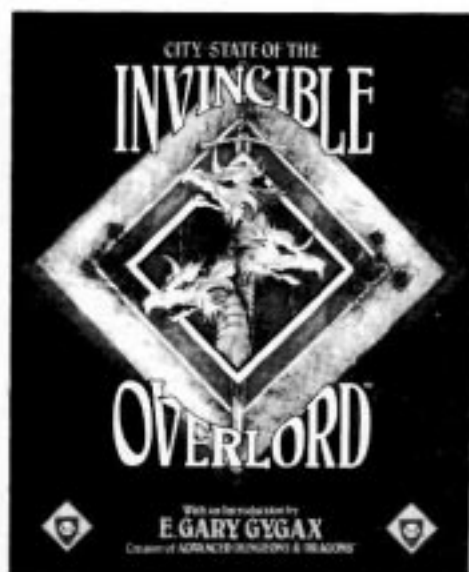
6. According to the FIEND FOLIO<sup>®</sup> tome, creation of a caryatid column costs somewhat more than building a stone golem and takes twice as long, a description that seems excessive given the two creatures' relative strengths. Revised figures are given in Table 2, with the cost still higher per hit point than for a stone golem. At the DM's discretion, "bulk discounts" could apply if a number of columns were built at one time. As noted in the text, the *manual of caryatid columns* (XP value 4,000; GP value 40,000) enables the construction of two such golems at the rate and time listed in Table 2.

7. The FIEND FOLIO tome lists the caryatid column's magic resistance as "all saves at +4," making no mention of other immunities or vulnerabilities. The description, however, clearly identifies it as a form of stone golem, and modification is therefore necessary. Like all golems, the caryatid is immune to mind-affecting spells, and like the stone golem, it is affected by *transmute rock to mud/mud to rock* and *stone to flesh* (no save allowed). Against all other spells, it saves as a 5-HD monster, adding its +4 bonus.

8. It is recommended that the experience-point value listed in the FIEND FOLIO tome be raised, partly to bring the award into line with those established for lesser golems in Table 1 and partly because the specified value of 280 XP seems unusually low, especially if the table on page 85 of the *DMG* is considered an accurate guide. In fact, a caryatid column, treated as a 5-HD monster, should have a higher rating given its special abilities: weapon breaking, resistance to physical weapons, and saving-throw bonuses. The experience-point value should then be 320 xp. If resistance to mind-affecting spells is counted as well, this award rises to 360 xp, still a level-V monster.

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# Through the Looking Glass

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## *From the Dark Ages to the dark future*

This month's column is of special importance because of the GEN CON<sup>®</sup>/ORIGINS<sup>™</sup> 1988 Game Fair at the Milwaukee MECCA arena, August 18-21. This convention will host the largest number of miniatures and miniatures events ever assembled in one place — over 150 events from many games. Games Workshop's WARHAMMER<sup>™</sup> FANTASY BATTLE and WARHAMMER 40,000 games are both represented in scenarios ranging from easy to "Do I really want to do that?" At least one Custer's Last Stand scenario is offered for FASA's BATTLETECH<sup>®</sup> game in which the emphasis is on originality and survivability. Historical conflicts of all periods and types abound. You can even experience the fierce competition of a Roman chariot race, complete with wheel slashing in the classic style of Ben Hur.

Many figure dealers will be represented, including some who have not been seen at GEN CON Games Fairs for many years. These booths will provide a wealth of miniatures, some of them special releases. Also in attendance will be several makers of scenery materials and buildings to spruce up any D&D<sup>®</sup> or BATTLESYSTEM<sup>™</sup> game.

Miniatures tournaments also play a major role at the convention. Many of the games are offered in order of increasing difficulty as the convention progresses, so that you can join a game and learn the rules on Thursday, then play moderately well for a tournament on Saturday. Some of the best tournament players will be coming for the historical events, and you will have a rare opportunity to watch them play and learn from them at the same time.

Last but not least is the miniatures painting contest. This gives everyone the chance to see some truly beautiful work and gain new insights into painting. We are proud to say that the expanded format of this year's show, with the separation of previous winners from newcomers, should produce more competition than

ever. We look forward to seeing some of your work there among the entries.

The following miniatures are rated on a four-star basis, with four stars being the best and one star the worst.

### Miniatures reviews

#### Stan Johansen Miniatures

SM007 Sci Fi Hand Weapons Set \*\*

SM012 Fantasy Weapons Set \*\*

Stan Johansen Miniatures is one of those small manufacturers that almost no one but the most fanatic customers have heard about. It carries a fairly comprehensive line of 20mm and 25mm figures and accessories that do equally well as friend or foe for AD&D<sup>®</sup>, D&D, WARHAMMER FANTASY, or WARHAMMER 40,000 games. The sets for review came bagged with a wrap-over cover that must be folded up to see the contents. The cover art is a simple black and yellow graphic with the set's number outside.

SM007 is the Sci Fi Hand Weapons Set. This pack contains two samples each of five different weapons. The package does not specify what the weapons are, but avid science-fiction gamers can guess that they might be energy rifles, machine pistols, plasma bazookas, and so forth. These lead weapons are simply done with almost no flash (excess metal forming along mold lines). They have a rough finish and are not greatly detailed.

SM012 is the Fantasy Weapons Set. This set is packaged exactly the same as SM007, except it contains medieval hand weapons and shields. The pack has two each of two types of pole weapons, one roughly based on the French infantry fork and one based on a halberd. Also included are one each of four different shields: round, square, triangular, and standard. The set also includes two hand axes, two swords, and two serrated-edge swords. The detail is good on the shields, but you will have to clean up some flash and cut off molding sprues (the metal projections left where

the metal was poured into the mold). The weapons are simple and not greatly detailed.

I gave these products an average rating, but with a little work these kits can help you make highly personalized armies. For this reason, I recommend them. Each set costs \$1.50 and is available from: Stan Johansen Miniatures, 56 Snow Crystal Road, Nagatuck CT 06770, U.S.A.

#### Games Workshop

(Citadel Miniatures)

WARHAMMER<sup>™</sup> Fantasy Regiments (#86659) \*\*\*

With this release, Citadel Miniatures has brought the miniatures gaming hobby full circle. When I started in the hobby, fantasy figures had yet to be introduced, and historical figures were confined to boxes of plastic Airfix miniatures if you wanted large armies (at \$.25 a box, you could put together a pretty good fighting force). A large fighting force in lead is likely to be very expensive today, but with the reintroduction of plastic figures into the fantasy gaming market, Citadel has once again made large hack-and-slash armies affordable to most of the buying public.

The contents of the box are listed as 10 elves, 10 dwarves, 10 dark elves, 10 skaven (equivalent to AD&D game wererats or rat people), 10 orcs, and 10 goblins. Also included are extra heads, weapons, 50 shields, and bases for all 60 figures. This is enough for a small war!

The figure box is definitely worth keeping. The instructions, color charts, painting guides, and brief scenario cover two sides of the box and the end panels, while the other two sides contain the statistics and histories of the six races. The statistics are for the WARHAMMER game system, but they're easily converted to whatever FRPG system you use.

The best point about these figures is also their worst. The figures are injection-molded in hard styrene plastic that, while keeping the figures inexpensive, does not allow for great detail. The bottoms of jerkins, coats, skirts, and so forth are solid and bowed-out, and chain mail does not come out quite as crisply as would be found on lead miniatures. The difference in detail between plastic and lead figures must be made up in the painting. Additionally, these figures are cumbersome to assemble in large units and are difficult to move in masses. Some figures also seem a bit chunky or outsized when compared with the smaller humanoid figures and skaven, but this almost seems to be a Citadel trademark as well as a result of using hard plastic.

The figures can be painted well, and the plastic makes it easy to exchange weapons and heads between figures. Liberal, careful use of plastic cement makes such exchanges permanent, and with other weapons and heads you can make a multitude of different figures.

These figures definitely make battle



groups in 25mm more affordable. With careful painting, some of them are difficult to tell apart from lead figures. This boxed set is available for \$22.95 in the U.S. from: Games Workshop US, 1220 Key Highway, Baltimore MD 21230, U.S.A.; phone: (301) 727-0250. In the United Kingdom, they sell for £9.99 through: Games Workshop, Chewton Street, Hill Top, Eastwood, Nottingham, United Kingdom, NG16 3HY; phone: 0773-713-213 or -760-462

# FASA Corporation

## C-IN-C Soft Metal Casting

Fluttering Petal Heavy Fighter \*\*\* 1/2

The RENEGADE LEGION™: INTERCEPTOR™ game is a fast-moving space-combat game from FASA Corporation in which the Terran OverLord Government is attempting to conquer a lone sliver of space controlled by the Commonwealth. As with any game system that uses counters, there is a cry for miniatures to replace those counters. This need is filled by the FASA-authorized miniatures of the different fighters involved, designed by C-IN-C Soft Metal Casting. While there are several different ships (six as of this writing), the Fluttering Petal of the Commonwealth Forces was the random choice for review.

This miniature is over 2" long and just short of 2" across at its widest point. The casting is good with almost no flash except at gun-barrel ends. The lines denoting control surfaces, indentations, and engine exhaust ports are crisp and sharp. The wing and body sections show no signs of pitting or warping that occasionally appear on metal models. The figure even has wing tips that work in a hinge pattern.

The only small problems that I could find were with the stand and a bend in the wing — the latter of which was my fault and the result of frequently handling the soft-metal figure without the stand. This soft metal gives the figure the ability to take sharp detail but also makes it susceptible to damage. The stand problem is typical with C-IN-C's flight models: The stand does not quite fit, so the model droops in flight. A little superglue and some work will remedy this problem.

All in all, this is an excellent miniature. With extra work, it would make a good space display model. It sells for \$5.00 and is available from: FASA Corporation, 1026 West Van Buren, Chicago IL 60607, U.S.A.; phone: (312) 243-5660.

## Alliance Miniatures

FAN09 Fighter in Plate (8) \*\*\*

FAN14 Female Fighter in Plate (8) \*\*\*

FAN16 Dwarf in Plate Mail with Axe (8) \*\*\*

FM21 Ent (1) \*\*\*

With so many mass-battle games for figures on the market, it becomes vastly more expensive to build armies of the sizes needed and increasingly difficult to find the space to conduct battles. However, 15mm fantasy figures give a pleasing compromise to both these problems. Battles that used to take a 12' x 6' table can

now be run on an 8' x 4' table in 15mm.

Some of the disadvantages of 15mm are not obvious. It is definitely harder to paint and superdetail 15mm figures, and it takes time to do them even adequately. Frequently, the lead bases on 15mm figures are too small to hold the figure straight; thus, the figures need to be mounted on small additional bases which can then be detailed.

The four figures received for review are representative of an expansive line of Alliance figures which includes a full line of adventurers (20 in all) and monsters. The four figures here range from 1/2" high for the dwarf to 1 1/2" high for the ent. Detail is very good on all the figures. The bark on the ent is clearly visible though it has occasional flat spots. The figures are well proportioned and appear to have the necessary number of pockets and packs to hold rations for a quest. These packs also add bulk to the figure for realism.

There is flash on some of the figures, but removing it does not endanger the integrity of the figures. Because some of the figure sets for adventurers are packaged eight per pack instead of 10, you may need to find a hobby shop that will sell extra figures to you separately if you are building up armies in groups of 10 figures per unit.

These figures open new horizons for fighting battles cheaply and in a minimal amount of space. In addition, it is easier to build dioramas with large amounts of figures. Each of the four packs mentioned costs \$3.50 and is available from: Alliance Miniatures, PO. Box 2347, Des Moines IA 50310, U.S.A.; phone: (515) 223-6215.

## Grenadier Models, Inc.

Goblin War Giant \*\*\*

Reviewing this figure was difficult. The Goblin War Giant is complex, not because of its number of parts but because of the amount of care required to assemble it. This is definitely not a kit for beginners! If you have not done extensive modeling work or you are not good at it, read on — but put off the purchase of this figure till you've had more practice.

This figure is huge, even given the usual hype pointing out that the figure is almost 200mm tall. The giant is well proportioned and gives you the feeling of endless endurance. The figure consists of eight parts, all matched in casting to fit together, but they need much work to get a perfect fit. Use epoxy glue with them. Gap filler is a must, because even after filing and fitting, some small spaces will need filling. Work can be saved by enlarging the giant's arm holes slightly, then squaring off the shoulder pegs to fit. With this done, the arms fit into the torso better. Remember to frequently check the fit of all pieces as you go, so as not to overadjust any part. The fit of the giant's carried platform should also be checked as you finish the figure, as any droop in the assembly of the giant will cause the platform to rock.



WARHAMMER™ Fantasy Regiments  
Photos by Mark Hammegren



Goblin War Giant  
Photo by Mark Hammegren

Once you finish the giant's assembly, you can appreciate the extraordinary amount of care used in its engraving. The severed heads hanging from different parts of his body have vivid horror etched into their lifeless faces. The giant's muscle tone, his resigned countenance, and the goblins hanging from him play against each other to produce a feeling of horror in any opponent the giant faces. This figure makes a great addition to anyone's army.

I don't recommend this as a practice piece. Take your time; if you rush the job or assemble it without experience, you may do poorly. The Goblin War Giant costs \$19.95 and is available from: Grenadier Models, Inc., PO. Box 305, Springfield PA 19064; phone: (215) 583-1105.

#### Deadlines and licenses

A customer walks into the games shop and looks around the counter. Stalking to the figure case, he glares at the shelves, checking every one, then walks at a furious pace to the shelves where the games and books were kept. "Where are they?" he screams. "Where are the new games and figures that were featured in DRAGON Magazine this month? They promised that they would be available!"

As a store owner myself, I can relate to the helplessness of both the customer and the shop owner, who have become victims of the great deadline and licensing wars. Very few people realize why certain merchandise is not released when promised in advertising, or is available in either the

U.S.A. or Europe, but not both at once. Given that DRAGON Magazine has an international distribution, it is important to understand these situations.

Magazines have deadlines for all of their production work — especially ads, and most especially ads with color printing. In many cases, the original ad requests must be received 120 days before publication (60 days for DRAGON Magazine); information for a company's product catalogs must be prepared even further in advance. If you work in a miniatures or games company and you have a product that you wish to highlight, it means that prototype covers have to be made up to six months beforehand, and production schedules must be figured over even greater periods of time. This leaves no margin for error if you are planning the release date of a product when you have only the initial ideas on that product.

To better illustrate the point, let's look at a hypothetical company and trace one of its products and associated ads. The company has come up with a game combining World War I biplanes and large monkey miniatures. The game designer maintains that the game is really good and will take a maximum of nine months, including play testing, to complete. The company believes him and tells him to go for it.

It is now six months from the planned date of release. The area manager asks the game designer whether the game is ready to playtest, and should the company reserve ad space. The designer, realizing that he has forgotten about the game because of his other projects, says it's ready to playtest rather than risk being fired. The company commits to ad space.

The designer works 14 hours a night for weeks at home and develops a set of rules. Four months from the game's planned release, he mails the game to playtesters. The company gives the game's release date to everyone in an effort to build up the game's reputation. Rough copy goes to the magazine for structuring the content of the ad.

At three months, color ad copy must be given to the magazine. The company asks the designer if there are any problems. The designer, who has gotten absolutely no feedback from the playtesters because they haven't gotten around to playing the game, foresees no problem and gives his go-ahead. The artwork is late from the designer, and the ad deadline is barely made in time. For all practical purposes, the company is now committed to the art, with no way out.

At two months, the last safety point, the designer still hasn't gotten any feedback (no news is good news). But at the 45-day point, playtesters write back and say the game is unplayable without revisions. With only 20 days until the game's release, after the designer has ulcers and a mild nervous breakdown, the rules are ready to go. Copy checking, printing, and so forth take 35 days, so the game will be only two

weeks late. It is hoped that everyone will understand. Then the printer sends the game proofs back with over 50 mistakes. The run can be done over, but it will take six more weeks — and the magazine comes out and the angry-gamer scene is played out in living color. All too often, the customer feels that the shopkeeper, no matter what he does or says, is covering up his mistake of not ordering the merchandise — and everyone loses.

Another problem results from the international distribution of DRAGON Magazine. People looking through the many well-done and colorful ads herein often find a figure or game that reaches out and grabs them. They hurry down to the stores, only to find out that they missed the fine print that said: "Sold In U.S.A." or "Sold in the U.K. and Continental Europe only." Why are those words there? What do they mean?

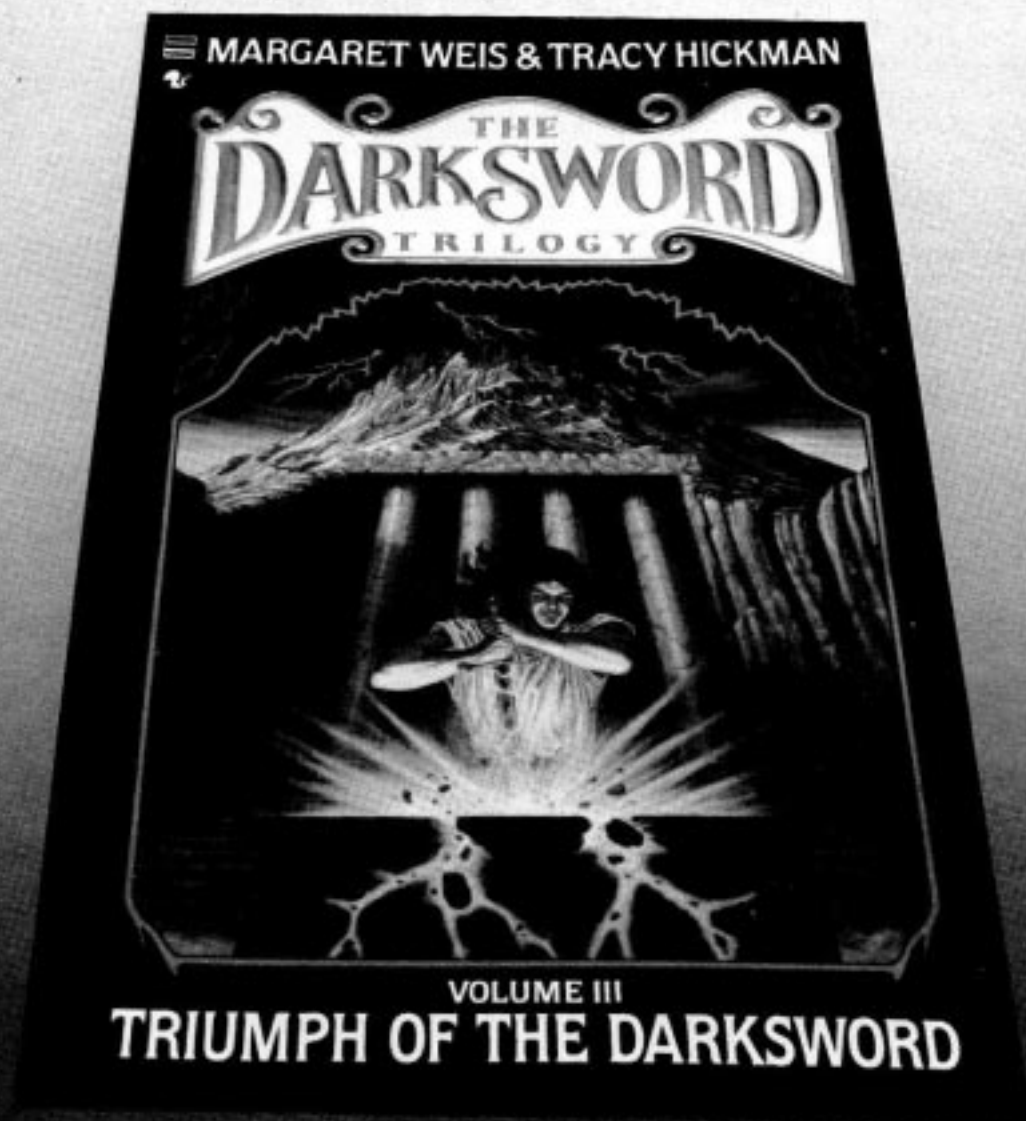
When a game is manufactured, the company that produced the game gets the rights to all merchandise that uses the name of that game. In many cases, that means the company can earn a great deal of money if the game sells well and as other companies bid money and royalty rights to be allowed to produce items for that game. The traditional market divisions for such game rights have been the U.S.A. and Europe, with a third market being the rest of the world. This division may seem strange, but consider that in most cases, you can produce greater profits by having two companies with rights to produce a game rather than just one. Additionally, there have been very few gaming magazines with any kind of circulation on an international scale. This created two markets with little or no crossover, and opportunities for one market to see what the other market had were rare. Miniatures companies with factories in more than one market would obtain rights to manufacture licensed figures in just one market, with a clause that prevented the "other" manufacturer from producing or selling in their zone. Examples are the LORD OF THE RINGS™ figures from Grenadier in the U.S. and Mithril Miniatures in Europe, and the TRAVELER® figures from Grenadier in the U.S. and Citadel Miniatures (Games Workshop) in Europe. These restrictions prevent the shopkeeper from legally bringing some of these items into his store, or they cause long delays in deliveries to customers. Store owners try to take care of their customers, but sometimes there are just too many barriers. We all must have patience and understanding regarding this problem.

I want to hear from you, and I'll read your letters even if I can't respond. Just write to:

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# TSR PREVIEW

## NEW PRODUCTS FOR JULY

### **GAZ** *The Northern Reaches*

**D&D® Gazetteer**

**by Ken Rolston**

Hate civilization? Love to loot and plunder the way the Vikings did? Then the Northern Reaches want you! This 96-page Gazetteer reveals the lore and lifestyles of the greatest barbarians the D&D® game's Known World have ever seen. This lively and entertaining work even includes its own 3-D village for PCs to explore.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$8.96/£5.95**

**Product No.: 9230**

### **The I THINK YOU THINK I THINK™ Game**

**Boxed family boardgame**

**by M. Boggs**

What do you think of yourself? What do you think other people think of you? Want to bet on it? This astounding game of think-and-double-think tests your opinions and perceptions of yourself and your friends in a fast-moving game for up to six players. The boxed set comes with question and answer cards, betting chips, game boards, and a score pad.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$19.95/£13.95**

**Product No.: 1036**

### **TS3 Orion Rising**

**TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game accessory**  
**by various authors**

The Orion Foundation has 12 international bureaus — but that's barely enough to save the world. For the first time, the full details on the "good guys" of the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game are presented in this 128-page softcover book. Each bureau is covered by a different author: Merle Rasmussen, Greg Gorden, Michael Stackpole, Paul Jaquays, Rick Swan, Chris Mortika, and more — the best in espionage gaming! Adventuring ideas and city information are included.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$8.95/£5.95**

**Product No.: 7630**

### **Libyan Strike**

**SNIPER!™ Adventure Gamebook #6**

**by Susan Spano**

Deep in Libya, thousands of suicide commandos are training for a terrorist war of enormous proportions. If their camp can be found, an air strike will take it out. One man has a chance to find that camp. That one man is you. This 192-page thriller is the latest in the SNIPER!™ Gamebook line.

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**Product No.: 8087**

### **DL15 The Mists of Krynn**

**AD&D® DRAGONLANCE® adventure anthology**

**by various authors**

Kender, minotaurs, gully dwarves, gnomes, draconians, Lord Soth, Fewmaster Toede, the Silvanesti elves, and every dragon on Krynn invite you to return to the world of the DRAGONLANCE® saga in this 128-page anthol-

ogy of adventures. A crack team of module designers was assembled to bring you these minimodules, each developing a different area of the world for your gaming enjoyment.

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### **The Name of the Game**

**GREYHAWK® Adventures #6**

**by Rose Estes**

Wolf Nomad Mika, with his demon hand and magical gemstone, must fight to save the kingdom of Perrenland from invasion — but he is deserted, stripped, and changed into a griffon! Only that and an army of monsters now lies between him and the success of his mission.

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## NEW PRODUCTS FOR AUGUST

### **Starsong**

**TSR™ Books novel**

**by Dan Parkinson**

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, elves left the Earth in voluntary exile. Now they've come back — but the world has changed for the worse. Elves and men must now work together to save the world from darkness. Author Dan Parkinson masterfully explores the unique world of the elves, who combine the senses of empathy and musical harmonics to become greater than human.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$3.95/not in U.K.**

**Product No.: 8200**

### **Spellfire**

**FORGOTTEN REALMS™ novel**

**by Ed Greenwood**

At last — a classic FORGOTTEN REALMS™ novel by the creator of the Realms himself: Ed Greenwood! Monsters and magic of unspeakable evil confront Shandril of Highmoon in this epic tale of danger and adventure in a land of mystery. Don't miss this one!

**Suggested Retail Price: \$3.95/£2.50**

**Product No.: 8413**

### **MERTWIG'S MAZE™ Gamefolio**

**AD&D® boardgame**

**by Tom Wham**

Who's in charge of this kingdom, anyway? This hilarious, fast-playing boardgame pits player against player as they race about collecting royal treasures, then pit their skills against the terrors of Mertwig's maze. This game includes a full-color map and playing cards, as well as detailed rules by the creator of some of the funniest games in the role-playing industry.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$9.95/£5.95**

**Product No.: 1038**

### **Ruins of Adventure**

**AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS™ module**

**by various authors**

Strategic Simulations, Inc. produced this

adventure as one of its AD&D computer modules. Now, play it out with all your friends! A band of heroes in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting enters a decaying town filled with evil. Can you stop the terror from spreading?

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**Product No.: 9238**

### **ME3 The Left Hand of Eternity**

**MARVEL SUPER HEROES® module**

**by Ray Winninger**

The mightiest of Earth's super heroes journey into the realms of magic on their way to a confrontation with the Elders of the Universe! This is the third and last module in the greatest MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game campaign of them all. Don't miss it!

**Suggested Retail Price: \$7.95/£—**

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### **The DRAGONLANCE™ Boardgame**

**Boxed family boardgame**

**by Michael Dobson, Warren Spector, and Scott Haring**

The dragons are back — and they want the world! TSR gives you the chance to save the world of Krynn in this exciting family boardgame, which includes over 200 colorful playing pieces and a colorful gameboard. Aerial battles and the quest for more powerful spells are but a part of this superb quest for the Dragonlance! This game comes with Basic, Advanced, and Optional rules.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$24.95/£19.95**

**Product No.: 1039**

### **BUCK ROGERS™ Battle for the 25th Century Boardgame**

**Boxed family boardgame**

**by Jeff Grubb, Flint Dille, and Warren Spector**

Armored spacecraft and armored soldiers battle for the fate of humanity in the 25th century — and the leader of the rebellion is none other than Buck Rogers himself! Troopers, killer satellites, fighters, and more collide in this boardgame for 2-6 players, with over 360 plastic playing pieces and a gameboard covering the inner Solar System. Join the fight!

**Suggested Retail Price: \$24.95/£19.95**

**Product No.: 3550**

### **GREYHAWK® Adventures**

**AD&D® hardcover rulebook**

**by James M. Ward**

You asked for it, and you've got it: The complete sourcebook on the greatest of fantasy gaming worlds: Greyhawk! All-new information is presented in this 128-page hardbound book, designed to be compatible with both the first- and second-edition AD&D® games. Roam the lands from the Wild Coast to the Sea of Dust, and learn the secrets of this unique setting for adventure.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$15.00/£9.95**

**Product No.: 2023**

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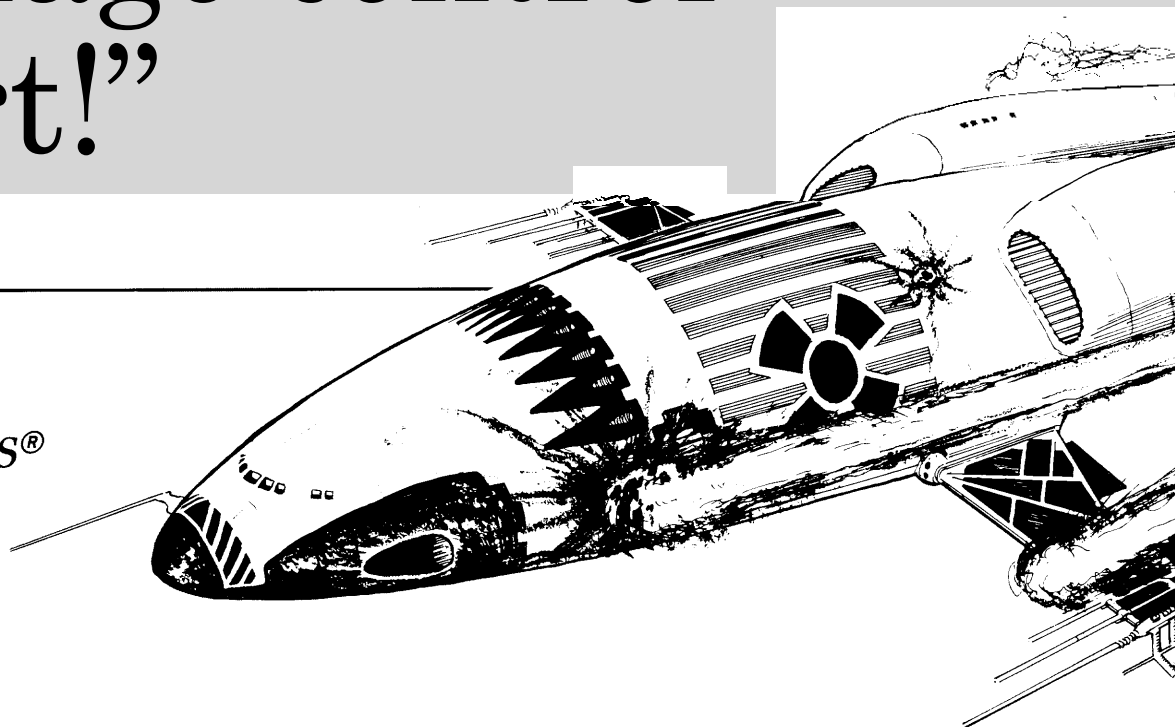


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# “Damage control — report!”

*Revised starship combat for the STAR FRONTIERS® game*



*The Nemesis rounded the final arc of the planetary orbit set up by its crew for mapping procedures. On the bridge, Commander Marc-sur-Lars patiently awaited the incoming information. The system didn't show much promise. It was more like a rest stop — but one far behind enemy lines.*

*“Sir, I'm picking up a faint energy source,” Hortlefloo, the Osakar pilot, examined his control screen. “It's at the sensor limit, over the approaching horizon. It might be a starship engine.”*

*“Full alert,” Commander Lars said evenly, pressing a small button on the side of his own command control panel. They were deep in Sathar territory; he couldn't take any chances with his 13-million-credit ship or its crew. The bridge lighting dimmed and slowly turned red. Lars could hear the alert warning in the corridor outside. So*

*much for the rest stop, he thought.*

*“I've got a fix on the ship on the main screen,” said the astrogator. Lars looked up and examined the image on the screen. It wasn't any known type of Sathar ship, but that meant nothing. The Sathar had all sorts of ships.*

*“It's powering up its weapons,” warned Hortletloo. “Now it's closing in. It's got us.”*

*“Battle stations. Conflict imminent.” Lars punched a second button and a warning klaxon sounded in the hall outside the bridge. Running feet pounded past the bridge door as crewmen ran for their combat posts.*

*Lars allowed himself a brief smile. “Mr. Harrachi,” he said, turning slightly toward the Yazirian weapons officer. “Please give our neighbor our warmest greetings.” And pray, he thought, that we give them ours before they give us theirs.*

In the STAR FRONTIERS® game, starship combat is played out using the Knight Hawks board-game system. Players in campaigns centered around a starship, like those concerning exploration missions, often find that starship combat is a time when they hang up their characters and concentrate solely on the dice. Here are some suggestions to liven up combat and bring characters out of the background.

In the Knight Hawks game, starship

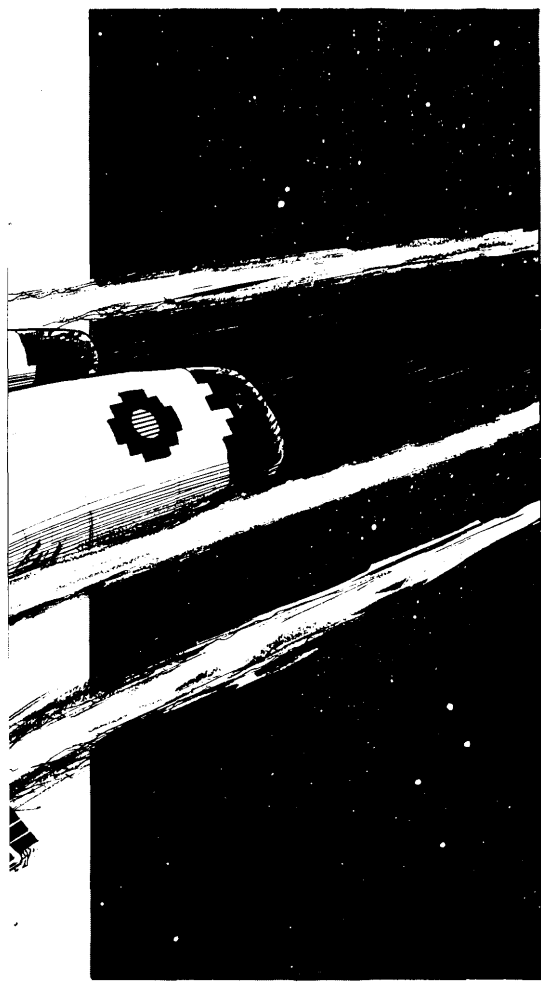
combat has two phases, movement and combat, with each side taking turns in a fixed order to perform its actions. Instead, a more flexible initiative system is in order. Initiative should be dependent on several factors: the maneuver ratings (MR) of the ships, the pilots' initiative modifiers, and the gunners' initiative modifiers. To determine the starship initiative modifier, find the ship on each side with the highest MR. Add the initiative modifier of either the

pilot or the gunner (whichever score is higher) to the ship's MR. The total is the starship's initiative modifier. Repeat this for as many combatants as needed. Then each side rolls 1d10 and adds the initiative modifier. The highest resulting number becomes side A, the first side to move, and the sequence of play in the Knight Hawk's Tactical Operations Manual, page 3, is followed thereafter.

After three turns in the advanced Knight Hawks game, there is a repair turn. This does not mean that the starships have disengaged and decided to start repairs, but it instead shows the culmination of efforts over the past three turns. For a more realistic approach, let repair rolls be made at the end of each combat turn. Of course, if the engineer starts work on one project, then another problem requires more attention a few turns later, the character will be faced with some interesting dilemmas. To have the engineer use his DCR rating, he must maintain work on a damaged system for three turns. If he stops to work on something else without completing the previous repair, all his work will go to waste.

In the advanced game, percentile dice are rolled when a ship is hit by enemy fire, and the Advanced Game Damage Table from the Tactical Operation Manual, page 12, is consulted. This table has little to offer player characters but major sys-





tem difficulties, ending in a quick death for the PCs and the loss of their expensive starship. The modified damage table with this article was developed to take into account other systems that could be damaged in combat. Some of this damage may not be immediately threatening, but it could cause trouble later on. The new results in the modified table are explained below.

**Ship's boats:** This hit disables one of the following, selected by 1d10 roll: 1-2, life boat; 3-4, launch; 5-6, workpod; 7, shuttle (if an assault carrier is hit, score the hit against a fighter); 8, fighter; 9-10, escape pod.

**Crew casualties:** Casualties depend on hull size and, to some extent, ship type. In any case, a single hit cannot reduce the crew to less than half of the last turn's total (to save PCs). Below is a table of hull sizes and the number of crewmen and passengers that can be lost.

#### HS Crew lost

1-2:	1
3-4:	1-5
5-7:	1-10
8-10:	2-20 (if an assault transport or passenger liner is hit, 20-200 are lost)
11-14:	3-30
15-18:	5-50 (if an assault carrier is hit, 10-100 are lost)
19-20:	10-100

#### Modified Advanced Game Damage Table

##### Modified die roll

##### Type of damage

-20-05	Hull hit: Double normal damage by weapon type
06-10	Ship's boats *
11-20	Crew casualties *
21-25	Cargo hit*
26-45	Hull hit: Normal damage by weapon type
46-48	Drive hit: Lose 1 ADF
49-51	Drive hit: Lose half of the total ADF (round up)
52	Drive hit: Lose entire ADF
53	Drive hit: Fuel loss*
54-57	Steering hit: Lose 1 MR point
58-59	Steering hit: Lose entire MR
60	Steering hit: Continue current course indefinitely
61-62	Weapon hit: LC; LB; PB; EB; AR; RB; LP* *
63-64	Weapon hit: PB; EB; LB; RB; T; AR; MM* *
65-66	Weapon hit: DC; LC; AR; T; LB; FB* *; SM* *
67-68	Weapon hit: T; AR; EB; PB; LB; RB; TB* *
69-70	Weapon hit: LB; RB; T; AR; PB; EB; LC
71-72	Internal systems hit *
73	Soda machine* **
74	Power short circuit: Lose all screens and ICMs
75-77	Defense hit: PS; ES; SS; MS; ICM; ENS* **
78-81	Defense hit: MS; ICM; SS; PS; ES; MF* **
82-84	Defense hit: ICM; SS; PS; ES; MS; ENS* **
85-87	Combat control system hit: - 10% on all attacks
88-90	Life support hit*
91	Computer hit *
92-96	Navigation hit: Lose all maneuvering control, moving at random
97	Holo games ***
98-105	Electrical fire: Roll additional damage at +20 each turn
106-115	Damage control hit: DCR cut in half
116	Steam baths ***
117-120	Disastrous fire: DCR cut in half; lose entire ADF and MR; - 10% on all attacks; roll damage at +20 each turn

Any hit that cannot be applied is treated as a normal hull hit.

\* This effect is described in the text.

\*\* All of these abbreviations are based on the weapons and defenses given in Gus Monter's article, "An Interstellar Armory," in DRAGON® issue #115. The abbreviations are as follow: LP = laser piston; MM = maxi-missile; FB = fusion bomb; SM = screen mine; TB = tractor beam; ENS = energy shield; MF = masking field. If this article is not available, ignore these results.

\*\*\* These areas can be hit only once. Subsequent hits here are treated as normal hull hits.

**Cargo hit:** One hull unit of random cargo is lost.

**Drive hit, fuel loss:** The fuel storage has been damaged. On atomic-drive ships, one engine has lost 1-5 fuel pellets. Ion-drive ships lose one-quarter of their stored hydrogen. Chemical-drive ships lose half their fuel.

**Internal systems hit:** This hit could affect combat performance but will more likely be a nuisance after the battle. The internal systems that can be hit are (roll 1d10):

1-2. Elevator: The emergency ladders will have to be used, so travel time between decks is doubled.

3-4. Food service: No food can be served from the galley as the food dispensers have been disabled.

5-6. Cameras: Internal cameras have failed.

7-8. Robots: Computer robot links are

down, so robots will not respond to computer commands. This hit may not show itself for quite a while, until someone breaks into the ship and the security robots fail to investigate.

9-10. Intercoms: Internal ship communication is down.

**Life support hit:** This hit gradually incapacitates the life support system. On the first hit, the main life support's capacity is reduced by half. The second hit knocks it out completely. The same progression is followed for the backup units.

**Computer hit:** This hit can be a real menace. First, determine at random which mainframe was hit. Good starship designers have a network of mainframes to prevent the destruction of all the computer programs at once. After determining the mainframe hit, randomly destroy one of the programs in that mainframe. Ω

# New Kicks in Martial Arts

## A guide table for creating martial-arts styles

The martial style combinations table (Table 69) on page 102 of the AD&D® *Oriental Adventures* is a fine and easy way to come up with original martial-arts styles

for the Dungeon Master's campaign, but it has its flaws. Without proper guidance, a novice DM may create martial-arts styles that are too weak or, worse yet, too pow-

erful. The table also lacks any way to create a powerful offensive style like karate, with its three attacks per round.

To help the DM create novel martial-arts styles, the following guide table (Table 1) is presented. There are eight possible offensive combinations linking a base number of attacks with a base damage. The combinations are ranked from most to least powerful on offense. There are two possible combinations that link three attacks per round with a base 1d6 or 1d4 hp damage, which are offensive combinations not possible to generate using Table 69. The second column also shows the maximum possible damage that can be done per round by the martial artist.

The more powerful a style is on offense, the less powerful it should be in other respects. The third column in the table gives the best possible armor class for the style. The most powerful offensive combination has at best an AC 8, while the two weakest combinations on offense may convey up to AC 5 on defense.

Next on the table is the highest possible special maneuver difficulty rank for the combination. Karate's most difficult maneuver is Strike 3, while the weaker styles on offense may go up to a difficulty rank of 6 or 7 (as is the case with Levitation or Slow Resistance).

The maximum number of special maneuvers in the style is given in the fifth column. Most combinations may carry up to 11 special maneuvers, while the more powerful combinations on offense have a lesser maximum. Generally, the more maneuvers a style has, the lower its highest difficulty-rank maneuver. Kung-fu and tae kwan do, on page 101 of *Oriental Adventures*, each has one difficulty rank 5 maneuver, while jujutsu, with its 11 maneuvers, has no special maneuver more difficult than Throw 4. Thus, the DM should avoid maximizing both difficulty rank and number of maneuvers for the same martial-arts style.

To balance the number of special maneuvers in a style with its difficulty ranks, the last column introduces the idea of "rank points," where the difficulty ranks for all the maneuvers in the style are added together. For example, karate has 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 9 rank points, or just under the recommended 10 rank-point maximum for this powerful martial style. Jujutsu has a total of 23 rank points, just under the suggested 24 rank-point limit. Similarly, kung-fu is not too powerful with 20 rank points.

Tae kwan do seems underpowered with just an AC 8 and only 16 rank points. The style could do with one or two more special maneuvers, such as Strike 2 or 3, to make it stronger. A revised version of tae kwan do may look like this:

Kick 1,2,3  
Strike 1,2,3  
Throw 3  
Movement 5

Table 1  
Martial-Arts Guide Table

Offense		Defense Best AC	Special maneuvers		
No. of attacks	Damage (max./round)		Highest difficulty rank	Maximum no. of maneuvers	Maximum no. of rank points
3/1	1-6 (18)	8	3	6	10
2/1	1-8 (16)	7	4	7	12
3/1	1-4 (12)	6	5	9	18
2/1	1-6 (12)	6	5	11	24
1/1	1-8 (8)	6	5	11	26
2/1	1-4 (8)	6	7	11	28
1/1	1-6 (6)	5	7	11	30
1/1	1-4 (4)	5	7	11	32

Table 2  
Example of a New Martial-Arts Style

Example style	No. of attacks	Damage	AC	Principle attack	Special maneuvers
	3/1	1-4	7	Hand	Vital 1,2,3 Movement 1,3 Push 2 Lock 3 Mental 1,2

The guide table presented herein is not intended to replace Table 69; it is meant to augment it. Table 69 should still be used to create the foundation of a martial-arts style. When rolling up the number of special maneuvers in a style, the DM could instead roll for 1-4 special maneuvers outside the principle method of the style, but the total number of maneuvers in the style still cannot exceed 11. When the style is finally created, the DM can compare the new style to the figures in the guide table to see if the new style is underpowered or overpowered.

An underpowered style can often benefit from a slightly better armor class or one or two more special maneuvers. Sometimes, however, the DM may wish to intentionally create an underpowered style that is quick for characters to learn and serves a specific function, rather than providing an all-purpose self-defense system.

A style that is overpowered can cause real problems in the campaign. A style that mixes a powerful offense with a number of high-difficulty special maneuvers will overshadow other martial styles in the campaign, make the students of the style too powerful in relation to other martial artists, and limit the number of PCs who are drawn to other styles. To keep a style from becoming too strong, the style should push toward the maximum in no more than two categories of defense or

special maneuvers. A style that attains the maximum in three or all four categories will likely be overpowered, and a style that exceeds the maximum in any category by a great degree is definitely unbalanced for any reasonable campaign.

Some martial styles created by Table 69 may be overruled by the guide table as being too powerful. For instance, it is possible to create a hard/soft vital area style with 2/1 attacks, a base 1d8 hp damage, and an AC 6. Still, such a combination is too powerful and will rapidly overshadow other styles in the campaign.

Optionally, the DM may choose to start with the guide table in creating a new style. The DM first decides on the principle method and hardness or softness of the style, then picks a proper offensive combination from the guide table and builds up the style. An advantage with this method is that the table provides for two offensive combinations not allowed by Table 69. The combination of 3/1 attacks and a base 1d6 hp damage is definitely a hard style with a low armor class, and it should have few special maneuvers, as with karate on page 101 of *Oriental Adventures*. The combination of 3/1 attacks and 1d4 hp damage is a hard/soft style that may carry a better armor class and more advanced special maneuvers. This combination creates fast, exciting styles that aren't too hard-hitting.

For example, let's start with the offensive combination of 3/1 attacks and 1d4 hp damage to create a hard/soft vital-area style. We'll limit the style to AC 7 and build up the special maneuvers toward the maximums in the number of maneuvers and number of rank points. This style has nine special maneuvers for 18 rank points, which fits in fairly well with the maximums set. This new style is shown in Table 2.

By keeping the martial-arts styles of a campaign world within reasonable limits, the DM prevents one or two styles from standing out as being substantially more powerful or effective than all other self-defense systems. This encourages players to explore a diversity of martial-arts systems before choosing the style to be studied by the player's character. Characters who learn different martial-arts styles add greater variety to the campaign and keep martial-arts combat from becoming too repetitive or predictable.

Not only does the guide table help keep martial-arts systems balanced in the campaign, it also expands the range of possibilities by allowing for two new offensive combinations. In all, balance and diversity both benefit, helping to keep the martial arts an ever-interesting part of an AD&D *Oriental Adventures* campaign.

Q

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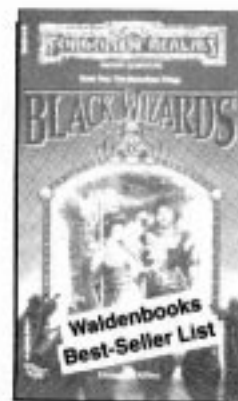
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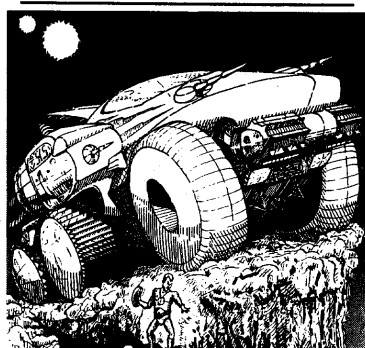
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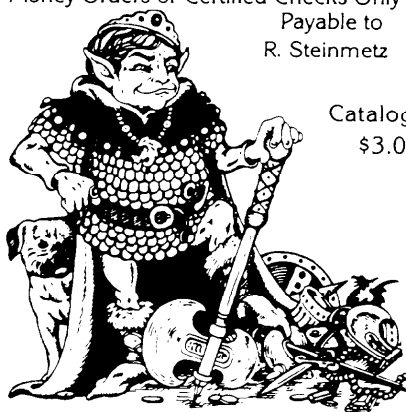
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## *The secret's out — on the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game*

When I arrived at TSR in January 1987, my first assignment was to develop and edit the new TOP SECRET/S.I.™ role-playing game that Doug Niles was designing. I don't think I'd been in my new office a week when someone dropped a file of letters 2" thick on my desk. The file was filled with letters from players of the old TOP SECRET® game. Some of the letters went back as far as 1980; some had arrived in the previous weeks mail. That file told an interesting story of delight, confusion, and concern — delight, because players, in general, liked the old TOP SECRET game, particularly its realism; confusion, because even some diehard fans couldn't figure out how some of the game's systems worked, and nobody seemed to know enough about the old TOP SECRET campaign world; and concern, because support products (modules, supplements, and the like) seemed awfully slow in coming. (One letter referred to the "annual TOP SECRET module.")

Anyway, Doug and I were charged with making sure the new TOP SECRET/S.I. game addressed the confusion and concern of old-time TOP SECRET players, without screwing up the delight part of the equation. Since the release of the TOP SECRET/S.I. game last August, gamers have been anything but shy about letting us know what they think of the job we did — my 2" -thick letter file is now 3" thick and growing.

Yes, we've gotten a lot of mail since the release of the new TOP SECRET/S.I. game — most of it positive. But many writers have tempered their positive comments with negative ones. As a result, it seems we ought to tell you why we made some specific design choices and what we're doing to address your concerns about the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game, in terms of adding realism, taking realism away, and doing both at the same time — really.

### Realism

If there was one thing the old TOP SECRET game was, it was realistic. That's the most common theme in my old letters file. Players loved the illusion of "being there," of feeling like an espionage agent. The old game had a seriousness, a sense of the everyday no other game like it could match.

By contrast, the new TOP SECRET/S.I. game is a fast-paced, free-wheeling, gung-ho kind of game. It's better suited to James Bond than Ollie North, and you'll have a far easier time re-creating *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* than the Walker family spy ring. At least, that's what some of the letter-writers seem to think.

Well, look again. The new TOP SECRET/S.I. game is unquestionably faster (and, to some extent, looser) than the old game, but the inclusion of Reality Rules gives you the opportunity to re-create just about any espionage situation, from the most fantastic to the most realistic.

"But the boxed set doesn't give us enough equipment," some letters complain. "We want real weapons and real cars, not generic rifles and sports cars." Fine; we've got that covered. Check out the first TOP SECRET/S.I. accessory: TSAC1 *The G4 File: Guns, Gadgets, and Getaway Gear*. There, you'll find more real-life, brand-name equipment than any role-playing game has ever provided between two covers. In *The G4 File* and other supplements, you'll also find the key to the whole TOP SECRET/S.I. game.

You see, while the boxed set is complete by itself, it was never intended to be the whole enchilada — not by a long shot. Our goal was to provide players — from the most experienced to the newest kid on the block — with the basic tools for getting started. For most, the boxed set will probably be enough. For those who want more — well, it's coming. It's in the accessories,

you see. You have some problems with the TOP SECRET/S.I. game? Stick around; we'll address them in a supplement. You say you're a realism freak and you want more detailed vehicle rules? Check out the *High Stakes Gamble* boxed campaign set, and you'll find expanded rules for vehicle chases, rules for running races, new maneuvers your ace drivers can attempt, and full-color statistics cards for some of the hottest vehicles with wheels, wings, and keels. In addition, *High Stakes Gamble* includes an introduction to Monte Carlo, with its casinos, yachts, and rich and powerful people, all set against the backdrop of international Grand Prix racing.

You say you're turned off by good guys and bad guys and all that silly Orion Foundation and Web stuff? Well, already available in book and game stores is TSAC3 *Covert Operations Source Book*, by military and espionage historian John Prados. There's not so much as a made-up name (except for real-world aliases) to be found anywhere in the book. Forget about Web and Orion if you want to — here's the straight stuff on the CIA and the KGB, along with descriptions of real espionage cases, many of which have never been published in book form.

TSAC6 *Covert Operations Source Book* 2, due out this winter, picks up right where the first volume left off, with descriptions of additional real-world espionage cases from the years 1945 to 1970. TSAC6 also includes profiles of the Israeli, British, and French intelligence services, plus the GRU (Soviet military intelligence service). Finally, you'll find the inside story on private corporations used by or acting as fronts for espionage organizations.

Coming in August to a hobby shop or bookstore near you is TSAC5 *Commando*, designed by Dave "Zeb" Cook. This accessory provides modern military, paramilitary, and antiterrorist action at its best (and we don't mean Rambo, either). Here's where you'll find all the rules you need to play a member of the world's elite fighting units — how and where they train, what they're trained to do, their equipment, their unique skills, and more. Again, the emphasis is on realism, folks. Be prepared to lose characters — this one's deadly, and even Luck Points won't always bring your character home alive.

Zeb's created a more detailed movement system that allows you to take into account terrain effects. He has also come up with new, specialized military skills, expanded demolition rules, details on military equipment, the latest information on agent insertion and extraction techniques, game systems for determining the effects of hunger, fatigue, stress, and "friction" (the build-up of things that can — and do — go wrong in covert operations), and much more. You want to know what's *really* going on in Mozambique? *Commando* is the sourcebook for you.

Oh, yeah — for those of you who want an early warning of upcoming products,

we've begun contracting for a book of adventures set in such places as Beirut, Seoul, and Panama. Check it out in 1989.

### Not-so-realism

So we've got realistic role-playing covered. How about not-so-realistic role-playing? Lots of letter writers asked as far back as 1980 when we'd add superpowered agents and 1930s pulp heroes. The answer was always "someday" Now, the answer is "soon — really soon."

TSAC2 *The AGENT 13™ Source Book*, designed by free-lancer Ray Winninger and due out this summer, tells you everything you need to know about adventuring in the 1930s. There are new rules, new skills, special powers that will make your character the scourge of the underworld, real-world time lines, and descriptions of every major pulp fiction genre with adventure suggestions for each — from hard-boiled detective stories to lost-world adventures to battles against organizations bent on world domination.

You'll meet all the classic pulp heroes, villains, and sidekicks, and learn about the cars, planes, weapons, and other equipment (real and imagined, mundane, superscientific, and fantastic) available in the 1930s. And once again, you'll get to pick your reality level — gritty, moderate, or farfetched. Oh, and of course, you'll get a complete rundown on the world of TSR's pulp hero, Agent 13.

TSAC4 *F.R.E.E.Lancers*, designed by Jeff Grubb, is also available for the TOP SECRET/S.I. game. In this sourcebook, Jeff takes you 10 years into the future. The world is pretty much as we know it today, with a couple of minor differences (okay, *major* differences): technology and genetic engineering have reached states of perfection almost unimagined today, allowing scientists to create humans with low-level superpowers; superconductivity has begun changing the way we live; men in powered armor threaten the peace, while others seek to preserve it; urban sprawl has united some major cities, creating huge megalopolises.

Into this world come the F.R.E.E.Lancers, superagents of this dark future. This is an adult future; not some kiddie comic-book world, but the kind of future in which we may find ourselves before too long. It's the kind of future in which we may all find ourselves hoping superheroes are real.

The TOP SECRET/S.I. game is a lot more than espionage. It can and will be anything you want it to be.

### Everything between

One of the things your letters told us was that the TOP SECRET game should be a game with well-defined espionage organizations and conflicts. We could have set TOP SECRET/S.I. modules in the real world of the CIA and KGB, Mossad and the PLO, and so on. We could have, but we didn't.

This brings us to the Orion Foundation

and the Web. Some may not like this black-and-white, good-guy vs. bad-guy conflict. We have on one hand the Orion Foundation, what amounts to an international police/investigation force unaffiliated with any one government. On the other hand is the Web: an international syndicate dealing in drugs, weapons, revolution, and criminal activity of all sorts. We chose that route for a couple of reasons.

First, we knew the "official" TOP SECRET/S.I. campaign world would be just one part of the picture — we knew we'd get to the "real" stuff eventually. Second, we wanted something entirely our own that we could make larger than life, more heroic and more fun. Finally, we figured if James Bond and *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* could thrive in a basically unrealistic world, so could our game. I mean, you don't find many role-players wanting to play William Casey versus the Contras; people want to play Bond vs. SPECTRE or U.N.C.L.E. vs. Thrush.

Doug realized this early in the design process, and when the entire Games Division got together to talk about the TOP SECRET/S.I. campaign world in early 1987, the only point that came up for debate was what to call the good guys and the bad guys. (Doug wanted to call the good guys the Web! That changed quickly.)

So, if you don't like Orion and Web, just ignore both organizations. We're turning out our own non-Web/Orion stuff so you can still give the TOP SECRET/S.I. game system a try.

### What's the point?

The point is that some gamers have misunderstood what we were trying to do when we created the TOP SECRET/S.I. game. Our goal in designing and developing the TOP SECRET/S.I. game was to create the most flexible modern role-playing game we could — and we think we succeeded. The variety of support products for the game is a direct result of that flexibility. Check out our accessories and see if you agree. And whether you agree or not, please keep my letters file growing; that's the way we judge how well we're doing. That's the way to ensure the TOP SECRET/S.I. game grows the way you want it to grow.

I'm a believer, but you don't have to take my word for anything. If the TOP SECRET/S.I. boxed set was everything you ever wanted in an espionage role-playing game, you know what I'm talking about. If the TOP SECRET/S.I. boxed set *didn't* meet all your needs, check out the accessories; we think you'll find what you're looking for. If you don't, just stick around. There's lots more coming.

### Spy's advice

In addition to praise and criticism for the TOP SECRET/S.I. game, your letters have included questions and corrections. This seems like as good a place as any to answer your questions.

### How many Luck Points do PCs start with?

The *Players Guide* says that PCs have a minimum of 2 Luck Points, but never tells you how to generate Luck Points in the first place. The Administrator secretly generates beginning Luck Points for each character by rolling 1d6 + 1, for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7.

### How quickly do characters recover from damage?

As stated in the rules, characters recover 1 point of wound damage immediately if they're treated by a character with the First Aid skill. They recover an additional point after 24 hours, and 1 point per week thereafter.

Bruise damage is recovered at a rate of 1 point per hour per body area damaged. An additional point can be restored through the application of First Aid, but this is a one-time bonus (you don't get an additional point each hour).

Recovery from CON damage is described in the *Administrators Guide*. The rate at which it is recovered depends on what caused the damage in the first place. Use the situations described in that book when confronted with something new.

Incidentally, the example of CON damage on page 71 of the *Players Guide* is wrong. There, Sebastian makes a check against his full CON rather than his current CON to see if he regains consciousness. All such checks are made at ½ CON or ¼ CON. Follow the rule, not the example.

When dealing with poison damage, first determine whether or not the character is killed immediately. If not, CON is recovered at a rate of 1d10 points per day. Antidotes can double or triple that rate, but this is determined by the Admin, taking into account the type of poison involved, the antidote, the character's CON, and so on.

### What's the minimum damage a character can do in hand-to-hand combat?

The minimum damage in such cases is 1 point.

### Can an AK74 assault rifle really use 5.56mm ammo?

No; this was an error. The AK74 uses 5.45mm rounds, not 5.56, as stated on page 5 of the *Equipment Inventory*.

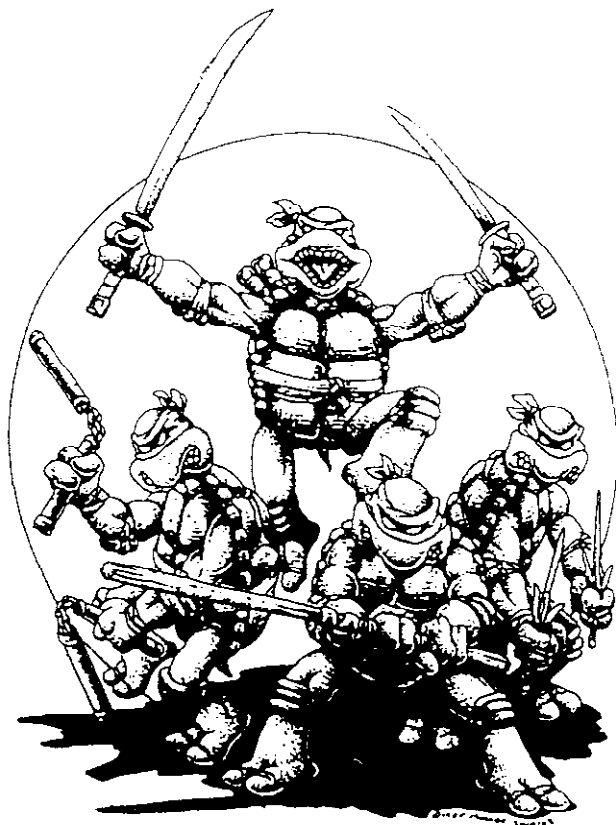
### Can an armored personnel carrier carry only two passengers?

No, that's a typographical error on page 15 of the *Equipment Inventory* Use 12 passengers for a generic APC, or use the actual carrying capacity for a real APC with which you are familiar.

### What's with the columns on the Aircraft Table on page 15 of the Equipment Inventory?

The line of type reading "Spd Spd\* Ceilg\*\* etc." was shifted one space to the

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right (see the aircraft tables on pages 67-76 of TSAC1 *The G4 File: Guns, Gadgets, and Getaway Gear*). Thus, the first column is Max Spd (maximum speed), the second is Stl Spd\* (stall speed), the third is Ceilg\*\* (ceiling), etc. (The asterisks are referenced in the table itself.)

**How do you fire a burst at multiple targets? Is it one to-hit and damage roll for each target, or one roll for all targets? And do all the targets you do hit take full damage?**

To fire a burst at multiple targets, make a separate to-hit and damage roll for each target. However, on a short burst fired at multiple targets, the attacker doesn't receive to-hit or damage bonuses. On a long burst at multiple targets, the attacker receives only a + 5 to-hit bonus and a + 1 damage bonus against each target.

**Where are the aircraft and boat rules? The skills are there to use these vehicle types, and there are listings for them in the Equipment Inventory, but there are no rules about how they go, stop, and maneuver.**

Boats work just like cars — their performance is measured using the same statistical categories, and they use the same maneuvers. Treat boats as if they were waterbound cars.

Airplanes use special statistics and maneuvers:


**Acceleration:** In level flight, propeller-driven aircraft can accelerate at 1% of maximum speed per turn. This can be increased to 10% of maximum speed by diving at least 100'. Prop-driven aircraft can't accelerate and climb at the same time — they must lose 10% of maximum speed if they climb more than 100' in a turn. Jet aircraft can accelerate up to 10% of maximum speed in level flight or climb. This can be doubled to 20% in a dive.

**Deceleration:** In a single turn, aircraft in level flight can decelerate by as much as 1% of maximum speed. They can lose up to 10% of maximum speed by climbing 100' or more in a single turn.

**Maneuvering:** Helicopters turn and use special maneuvers like automobiles. All other aircraft turn very gradually in a two-second TOP SECRET/S.I. game turn — up to 15° to the right or left if the pilot makes a successful Piloting skill check. If the check is unsuccessful, the aircraft turns only 5°.

If you've got a better idea of how to make airplanes and helicopters work, write it up and send it to us!

If you find any other mistakes or have any questions, you know where to find us. Keep writing and, whatever you do, don't blow your cover! Ω



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# The Role of Computers

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## *One dungeon that's tough to master*

If you haven't yet purchased your computer system and plan to run one of the greatest fantasy role-playing games ever produced, we recommend any of the following machines: Atari ST, Commodore Amiga, or Apple IIGS. The reason for these recommendations is that on those computers, you can play *Dungeon Master* from FTL Games. On a one-to-five star rating, this game is near the top.

---

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### ***Dungeon Master***

\*\*\*\* ½

Atari ST version

FTL is responsible for perhaps the greatest single-environment adventure yet developed for personal computers. A dungeon, regardless of its number of levels, is still only one physical location, and *Dungeon Master* takes place within a single dungeon.

Relying on the advanced architecture of the systems we recommended, *Dungeon Master* offers: scintillating graphics and smooth animation; sparse but effective digitized sounds; marvelous tricks, traps, and puzzles; and a real-time "you-are-there" presentation. *Dungeon Master* makes the player feel as though he is experiencing the adventure firsthand, as all of the game's rewards and intriguing hazards have an immediate feel to them.

Currently available for the Atari ST computer, FTL has also released a Commodore Amiga version and plans to release an Apple IIGS version later this year. (We'll report on both the Amiga and Apple IIGS versions as soon as we can.) The Atari ST user base is somewhat smaller than those of other systems, and we hadn't heard about this program until several months after its introduction. This shows the problems a small computer company has

in obtaining both publicity and distribution channels for their products. Nevertheless, *Dungeon Master* is awesome!

Regardless of your current computer system, you must get a look at this program. If your local computer retailer doesn't stock *Dungeon Master*, you might want to recommend that he start carrying that product. When *Dungeon Master* is available for the larger number of Apple IIGS and Amiga users, the dealer will thank you for the tip.

The Atari ST program takes full advantage of that system's advanced graphics capabilities and offers the player the digitized sounds of opening doors, monster attacks (the cry of a mummy can send shivers down your spine), drinking water, eating food, and blood-curdling screams as characters fall into traps. Nothing is overdone; everything is more than you would expect from a computer-based adventure game. The compression techniques FTL must have employed when coding the game to fit it onto a single micro disk are astounding! There are other games on the market today with half *Dungeon Master's* capabilities that require six to eight double-sided disks. The key to success is the commitment to user enjoyment and technical excellence.

The program was designed by Doug Bell, Mike Newton, and Dennis Walker. Whereas most computer-game companies start with an entertainment product and then write business applications later on, FTL has come into the field backward by producing spelling checkers for a variety of productivity programs first (an endeavor in which they were quite successful). With a solid revenue base generated by their productivity products, FTL plans to develop several computer games, many within the fantasy role-playing arena.

The quest in *Dungeon Master* encompasses the search for and recovery of the Firestaff. Four staunch adventurers must enter this most forboding dungeon and

confront abhorrent foes, brain-teasing puzzles, and horrendous traps. The player selects his party from the 24 adventurers who on earlier explorations succumbed to the deadly forces within the corridors, rooms, and passageways of the dungeon. The souls of these fine folk have been trapped within the Hall of Champions, which lies just beyond the master door of the dungeon.

Each Champion is captured in a mirror and may be reincarnated or resurrected by the player with a touch of the ST's mouse. The wise player, however, will investigate each Champion prior to activating that character. There is a variety of physical attributes possessed by each past Champion, each playing an important role in the survival of the entire group. Part of the player's mission within this game is the selection of the most appropriate party of Champions to locate the Firestaff.

There are three major character attributes: Health, Stamina, and Manna (magic energy). To cast spells of a Priestly or Wizardly nature, the caster must possess the necessary amount of Manna to utter the syllables of the spell. Through practice with various spells, all spell-casters can increase their ability to cast magic. As each spell is learned, the wise player writes down the syllables required to cast that particular form of magic. Spells can even be prepared before an encounter occurs, then released at the right time during the confrontation. No Manna is lost until the spell is actually cast.

The same practice-makes-perfect ethic holds true for the Ninjas and Fighters of the group; the more they practice with their weapons, the more proficient they become with them. If you thought piano practice was boring, try throwing a dagger repeatedly at a dungeon wall for several minutes. Nevertheless, the experience gained in throwing that dagger improves the character's ability to hurl a dagger effectively in battle.

Let's examine the typical adventurer screen as it appears on the Atari ST. Screen 1, the inventory screen, shows an adventurer named Zed, Duke of Banville. At the top of the screen are the names of the complete party: Halk, Zed, Alex, and Syra. The bar graph next to each name indicates that Champion's current Health, Stamina, and Manna scores. The lower the level of the bar, the lower the value of the quality. The four icons in the upper right corner of the screen represent the order of the party, with the colors indicating the characters' positions.

By looking at the character boxes at the top of each screen, you can tell immediately which weapon is carried in a character's right hand and what item is held in his left. The small upper window to the right of the main view window is the place where spells are cast, with the party's attack weaponry shown below that window. The direction window at the bottom right has icons for six possible movement



directions (more on these later).

The eye icon is used to view equipment or to obtain a listing of Zed's current attributes. By moving the cursor over the eye and holding down the mouse button, the food-and-water bar graph is replaced with a list of Zed's current statistics: Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom, Vitality, Antimagic, and Antifire. To determine what a character possesses, the cursor can also be positioned on any object and moved to the eye, with the button again held down. A brief description of the item and its weight appears in the food-and-water bar graph window.

The mouth icon is used to drink or eat. By dragging a block of cheese or bread, a water flask, or a glass potion vial to the mouth, the character partakes of that substance when the mouse button is held down. When a container has been emptied, however, the player must remember to refill the flask or bottle from a fountain.

This window also contains representations of material goods that can be used by the character. The first square beneath the eye represents the adventurer's neck. In Zed's case, some sort of necklace or medallion is shown being worn around the neck. Rarely are such possessions nonmagical in nature.

Below the neck is a square that represents whatever is being held in the character's left hand (in this case, a shield). The next two squares down form the pouch, which is a great place for smaller objects such as gems and the like. The four squares in the middle of this display represent the character's body, starting with the head and moving down through the chest, legs, and feet. Onto these areas, you position appropriate headgear, armor, leggings, and boots you find within the dungeon. The lower the level of the dungeon, the more protective the clothing and armor that are found there. To clothe your adventurer in new armor, simply click the mouse on the armor you find, press the function key that corresponds to the character (F1 for the first character, F2 for the second, and so on), and move the clothing over the body area to receive the item. A click exchanges the clothing. Thereafter, you can leave the inventory window and simply drop the unnecessary item you've exchanged for the armor.

The two lines of squares to the right of the mouth represent the backpack; this is the main storage area for each Champion. You must remember that each adventurer has a load limit; if too much weight is carried, that Champion is slowed down. There is room for 17 different objects to be carried. We found these areas most suited for storage of healing potions, protection potions, and food. In the case of screen 1, Zed is carrying a rock, a water flask, a gold coin, two potions, a Screamer slice (who says dead enemies can't be beneficial?), an apple, a dagger, and a valued treasure. The squares below the backpack reveal that Zed is armed with a



*Dungeon Master:*  
The inventory screen



*Dungeon Master:*  
The Guardian



*Dungeon Master:*  
The Blue Goons

sword, which is carried in his right hand, and he bears a crossbow and quiver; the quiver stores objects that can be reloaded when in combat (such as arrows, daggers, or stones).

Note the bottle that seems to be floating above the inventory window. Whatever object has been selected by the mouse is named below the character position icons: in this case, an empty glass flask. The player has selected this flask and is either about to place it in inventory or in a spell-caster's hand, perhaps because the mage is casting a spell to make a potion, and the magically created liquid must be immedi-

ately stored in a container. If there is no glass vial to receive the magic liquid, the spell will not be cast. The program alerts you to this condition, so the Manna isn't wasted. To store a potion, simply position the vial in the spell-caster's hand and utter the incantation.

The food-and-water bar graphs indicate how hungry or thirsty the selected character is. As prolonged activity is completed, the character requires nourishment. When these bar graphs fall into critically low values, the bar graph itself turns yellow or red — a sure indication that you'd better find a water fountain or food



*Dungeon Master:*  
A strange hallway

4



*Dungeon Master:*  
A trapped chest

5



*Dungeon Master:*  
The Eyeball Creature

6



before you really hurt your Champion.

One of the most original and truly exciting parts of *Dungeon Master* is its spell-casting system. The window below the Champions' position icons is the spell window. The small squares in the top of this window activate strange-looking icons. By clicking in one of the squares, the Champion uttering the spell becomes active. In this case, Alex is selected. Each symbol is a magical syllable of a spell. Some spells are rather complex and require four syllables for completion. Others, such as the magic torch spell, require only two syllables.

Spells all start with a determination of the amount of power to be cast. This is followed by the spells Elemental Influence, Form, and Class/Alignment (if necessary). Each segment of a spell can possess one of six specifications.

Each syllable is "spoken" by selecting its appropriate icon in the spell window. For example, to cast a magic torch, one first selects the icon for LO in the Power category. This icon then appears in the casting line of the window. Then, select the icon (FUL) for the Elemental Influence portion of the spell to appear, and it appears in the spell-casting window beside LO. The magic

torch spell is completed; to cast it, the player clicks the mouse cursor on the spell line. In screen 1, the caster has already mumbled three portions of a spell, those being UM (the Power portion), FUL (the Elemental Influence) and BRO (the Form portion). Depending on the spell attempted, the caster may be required to pick one of the remaining icons as the fourth part of the spell, the Class/Alignment portion.

The success of the spell depends on the experience of the spell-caster. The program notifies you of any failure, and successful spells are immediately evident on the screen.

What's terrific about the spell abilities is that you can prepare your magic but not cast it until it is needed. For instance, if you know that five mummies await your party behind the next door, the best course of action may be as follows: First, prepare protection potions for the two up-front fighters and have them swallow the liquid (the protection is indicated by a blue box around their names). Next, the wizard prepares lightning spells and the priest prepares a monster confusion spell. Then, ever so cautiously, the fighters open the door. As the nasty mummies appear, both the confusion and lightning spells are released by the appropriate spell-casters, hopefully eliminating some of the adversaries right away. With magical protections secured, the fighters then hack and hew the opponents while the two spell-casters throw daggers or throwing stars, or perhaps cast other spells. As we prefer to reincarnate the adventurers from the Hall of Champions, we try to afford each character with multiple talents, so our spell-casters always have ninja qualities for throwing weapons. Our magic-users are always in the back row of the adventuring party for protection, which has worked well for us.

The window below the spell-casting window depicts the weaponry wielded by your characters. (In screen 1, there's a double-headed axe, a sword, a whip, and a staff.) When confronting murderous opponents, the player clicks the mouse cursor on one of these weapons, and several choices for that weapon's use appear onscreen (for an axe, the choices could be slash or chop). Click on the appropriate action, and that offensive maneuver is carried out. If the weapon scores a hit, the number of damage points done to the opponent flashes onscreen. You can then click on the sword and activate some action there. A staff might have magical capabilities; a click on its icon presents its offensive choices. Should you change the weapons in a character's hand, the new weapon icon shows up in his weapon window.

The bottom right window contains movement choices. The solid arrows move the party forward, backward, left, or right, while the outlined arrows turn the party in 90° increments left or right. Movement can also be accomplished using

the ST's keyboard keys. Onscreen movement is as smooth as silk.

During play, the major screen window gives a view of the dungeon's surroundings. Screen 2, for example, shows dungeon walls with a rather obnoxious rock creature on the attack. In screen 3, the Blue Goons are on their way to greet you, having just walked through an open gateway. Screen 4 shows a dungeon hallway with a trapdoor, a water fountain on the wall to the right, and an interesting scroll ahead. That must have been one heck of a chest in screen 5 (a caution to use care when you peek). In screen 6, the Eyeball Creature is looking at the party inside a large dungeon room.

The walls and floors of the dungeon have been meticulously designed so that individual stones (perhaps with a bit of mold here and there) can be viewed when the amount of light coming from your party reveals their presence. After only a few minutes of intense screen viewing (and extremely critical mapping), the player feels as though he is in the dungeon, conducting this quest in real-time.

Perhaps you have played some adventure games in which running away was a good policy. By retreating, your party avoids instant decimation at the hands of a superior foe, or escapes from the heinous clutches of the monstrous beings. Well, this is not the case with *Dungeon Master*. You might run, but believe us, you will be pursued by even the slowest of adversaries. Early in our first try at this adventure, we happened upon a rock creature in a room called The Guardian. After the ignominious defeat of our entire party at the hands of this strange pile of rocks (see screen 2), our second try found our band of hearty troops retreating after a number of minor spells did little to halt the beast. As running depleted our energy, and with Manna running low, our party fled back to the entrance of The Guardian and slept. During this respite, we watched our Health, Vitality, and Manna increase as the bar charts indicated our return to normal conditions. Suddenly, there was the "Oomph!" sound of a successful hit; our lead character was nearly depleted of Health! We awakened immediately and, sure enough, the slow but steady rock-pile creature had made its way up from the rear and had attacked us while we slept. It was then only by accident that we discovered that the gates found inside the dungeon are also good offensive weapons. In our haste to prepare some sort of defense, we closed the gates. With a grinding noise, the metal bars descended but were blocked from closing by the rock-pile creature. The gate continued its attempt to close and smashed away at the creature until the beast was nothing but a bunch of pebbles. Thank heavens for accidents!

There is much more to this game than combat, though. Located about the halls, corridors, and rooms of this large dungeon are secret doors that conceal not

only wealth and extraordinary weapons, but malevolent beings as well. When walking down long corridors, it is always a good idea to keep an eye on the walls themselves. Every now and then, you'll note what seems to be a glitch in the computer graphic — a slightly different look to a particular wall surface. Upon closer investigation, you'll find that the glitch in the stonework is actually a rectangular button that, if pushed, opens a secret doorway in the next square or activates a doorway in another area of the dungeon. There are teleportation areas and door trips that require prolonged investigation to figure out exactly how they function. Some doors that bear menacing messages can actually be hacked through, while others require a search for a completely different entrance.

With the Save Game feature available at any time during the game, *Dungeon Master* provides a most masterful adventuring environment. The only drawback is that the game does not recognize more than one disk drive, so saving and restoring games requires some time and effort because of the necessary disk swapping. The game is copy-protected, but we have heard of some pirates who have managed to break the code. We have also heard that one version of the pirated *Dungeon Master* contains a fatal bug that crashes the game at inopportune times. Piracy is theft, plain and simple, and FTL's hard work should be supported by players paying for the privilege of running this adventure.

There is no doubt in our minds that *Dungeon Master* deserves to be in your software library. We can only hope that versions for other computers will be produced soon. For registered owners of the game, a new mini-module will be released before the year's end by FTL Games. The module will extend the current dungeon and add more spells and weapons. We look forward to reviewing this module when it becomes available.

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**XOR Corporation**  
**5421 Opportunity Court**  
**Minnetonka MN 55343**  
**(612) 938-0005**

### ***Basketball Challenge***

IBM micros and compatibles version

If you really enjoy basketball from the coaching perspective, *Basketball Challenge* is a game that you won't want to miss. If you are at all familiar with *NFL Challenge*, you now have that game's equal available for the basketball court. Don't expect superb graphics, because that's not what the game is all about. Players are translated into numbers on the onscreen court, and it's your job to determine the plays and sets, offense and defense, throughout the game.

As the coach, you must learn how to effectively use the stars on your team, as well as how to obtain the best perform-

ance from your regular players. You can substitute players to take advantage of a strong bench and use your players' strengths during the game. Because basketball is such a fast-paced game, even calling out plays from the sidelines as an offensive set progresses is not necessarily acted upon immediately by the team, especially if there is a radical change of set involved and a new shooter called for.

***Basketball Challenge*** is the best pure basketball simulation on the market today. With the ability to call various defenses (man-to-man, zone, full-court pressure, and steal attempts), any offense picked by the opponent can be countered. But that takes many minutes of watching and waiting for the right moment to change tempos or matchups. A knowledge of basketball is not necessary for this game, but it certainly helps. *Basketball Challenge* can be played by one or two players; the computer can also play against a human opponent or run the entire game as both players. If you are a basketball fanatic, XOR's offering is definitely for you.

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**SEGA of America, Inc.**  
**573 Forbes Boulevard**  
**South San Francisco CA 94080**

### ***FantasyZone***

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Nintendo, Sega, and Atari 7800 versions

This is the first of many reviews that will cover the Nintendo, Sega, and Atari 7800 video game machines. *Fantasy Zone* may seem to be just another shoot-'em-up arcade game — but that only goes to prove that appearances can be deceiving! This game includes colorful graphics and an original musical score. In this game, you become an Opa-Opa, a creature that looks like an egg with wings (but armed with guns and bombs). Your goal is to conquer eight different planets. This may seem easy at first, but it is a difficult task to accomplish. There are many creatures that have different plans for you. Many of these hostile adversaries depart from bases which must be destroyed. Unfortunately, these bases require multiple hits for total destruction. When you have eliminated all the bases on one planet, you must fight the boss for "bragging rights" to that planet. Each boss is quite different, and they become progressively harder to defeat.

This game is appealing enough as we've already described it, but Sega has developed it even further. After you destroy bases or enemies, coins appear which you can collect. Every so often, shops appear onscreen. Here you can buy items to build your own spaceship: engines to propel the ship; a selection of weaponry including wide beam, laser beam, and 7-way shot capability; and smart, fire, twin, and heavy bombs that offer more boom for your buck. You can also purchase extra ships to help conquer the game's various worlds.

The engines stay with your ship until it



**Basketball Challenge:**  
The best pure  
basketball simulation  
on the market



is eliminated by enemy action. When you buy a special bomb, you can only obtain one (except for the twin bomb). This was the only area where we found the game somewhat lacking. The weapons cost enough as it is, and it's frustrating that you can keep these enhancements for only a short period of time. The bosses at the conclusion of each level may have a specific weakness to one of those purchased special weapons, but you can find this

out only through the try-and-try again method. (Here's a tip: The first-level boss hates to have a "load" on its mind).

This game is original in concept, and we like the fact that you can buy enhancements and extra men for the game. Obviously, Sega spent a good deal of time developing this arcade treat. *Fantasy Zone* was not overly frustrating to play because every time the game was played, advances were made.

## News and new products

### Accolade

20813 Stevens Creek Boulevard  
Cupertino CA 95014  
(408) 446-5757

Commodore 64/128 users should be delighted with the latest arrival from Accolade, a naval combat simulation entitled *Power At Sea*. This offering is based on the Battle of Leyte Gulf, which took place in the Pacific theater in World War II. This game features strategy as well as arcade-style action in four video game sequences. You assume the role of the captain and must determine the fleet's strategy to accomplish your mission within 96 hours. Your fleet consists of a battleship, a cargo/troop ship, and an aircraft carrier supporting fighter/bombers. To complete the mission, you must battle through enemy fortifications, launch troops, and take enemy bases. This is a lot of action for \$29.95.

### Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive  
San Mateo CA 94404  
(415) 571-7171

This company has gone berserk with new releases, some of which have been long awaited by eager players. Of most importance to fantasy role-playing gamers is the release of *The Bard's Tale III*:

with its performance on an 8-bit Apple IIe. (And if that's the case, what will *The Bard's Tale III* be like when written specifically for the Commodore Amiga, Atari ST, or Apple IIGS?)

In this scenario, Skara Brae is in ruins. The Mad God Tarjan arrived during the celebrations following Manger's defeat in *The Bard's Tale II* and reduced the town to rubble. You must assemble your party of adventurers, find Tarjan, and stop him from leveling other cities. The price for this version is \$49.95.

Commodore Amiga owners, get those racing gloves on. Electronic Arts has released *Ferrari Formula One*, one of the most astounding racing simulations we've ever seen. You race a \$350,000 Ferrari F1/86 on any of 16 international race courses. You can check the car's vital statistics before the race, then go head-to-head against seven different opponents. A review will be forthcoming, as the Amiga's capabilities are truly employed in this great racing simulation.

### MicroProse Software

180 Lakefront Drive  
Hunt Valley MD 21030  
(301) 771-1151

For those who continue to write to us regarding games that run with a Hercules Graphics Card (HGC) in their IBM micros or compatibles, there's good news from MicroProse. Their *Gunship* attack helicopter simulation can now be run using the Hercules monochrome standard. This software is a best-selling simulation of flight aboard the U.S. Army's AH-64A Apache helicopter, with over 30 keyboard or joystick commands. The game requires at least 256K of memory and is \$49.95.

*Thief of Fate*. Yes, folks, Electronic Arts is now distributing the Apple II version of this game from Interplay Productions. With more than 100 magic spells, over 500 beasts, 13 character classes, 84 dungeon levels, seven dimensions, smooth animation, and fast game play, it appears as though the company has another winner on its hands. We've only started to review this offering and are already impressed

## Computer-Games Conversions Chart

### Electronic Arts (415) 571-7171

*Alien Fires* — 2199 A.D. to Atari ST (\$39.95) and Amiga (\$49.95)  
*The Hunt For Red October* to Amiga, Atari ST, and Commodore 64/128 (all versions, including original IBM, are \$49.95)  
*Patton vs. Rommel* to Commodore 64/128 (all versions, including IBM and Macintosh, are \$29.95)  
*Strike Fleet* to Apple II (\$34.95) and C64/128 (\$29.95)

### Rainbird Software, distributed by Activision (415) 960-0518

*Jinxter* to Atari ST, PC/MSDOS\*, Amiga, and Macintosh (\$39.95); to Commodore 64/128 and Apple II, text only (\$34.95)

### Spectrum HoloByte (415) 522-3584

*Tetris* to Commodore 64/128 (\$24.95) and IBM micros (\$34.95)

\* IBM micros require EGA card and 256K for graphics display of game.

## Origin Systems

136 Harvey Road, Building B  
Londonderry NH 03053  
(603) 644-3360

One of the most played and most enjoyed adventure game series has been the *Ultima* series, having now shipped over 1,000,000 copies. Origin Systems is now shipping the latest in the *Ultima* saga, *Ultima V: Warriors Of Destiny*. Initially released in Apple II format, *Ultima V* begins after Lord British has left Blackthorne (one of his most trusted knights) as ruler of Britannia while he investigates the newly discovered underworld. Unfortunately, Blackthorne is seduced by power and rules Britannia with a tyrannical grip. Rescuing the nation from Blackthorne is the gamer's charge. Standing in the way of success are deadly new creatures, animated special effects, and forbidding three-dimensional dungeons. Add an enhanced combat system and a host of new treasures, and you've got another "must-buy" computer-based adventure game. Versions for the Commodore 64/128 and IBM micros and compatibles have just been released. Watch for Origin Systems



**Gunship:**  
The Apache in action

to also begin programming for the Apple Macintosh computer. The price is \$59.95.

## Spectrum HoloByte

2061 Challenger Drive  
Alameda CA 94501  
(415) 522-3584

*ZIG-ZAG* has been shipped for the Commodore 64. This game was originally

designed and programmed in England, and is another member of this company's International Series. You must swiftly maneuver a star-fighter down the narrow passageways of the Matrix of Zog somewhere in the 12th dimension — but watch out for disappearing barriers, traps, and timelocks! You can purchase maps, shields, an extra life or two, and infrared and x-ray vision to help you out. The price of this arcade game is \$24.95.

## Clue corner

More and more readers are submitting their hard-won clues to us for publication. We are delighted to receive so many letters and hope that, over the next few months, additional game hints will arrive for some of the lesser-known offerings as well. Most of the hints are coming in for *Might and Magic*, *The Bard's Tale I*, and *The Bard's Tale II*. If you are currently engaged in another adventure, please don't forget to mail those hints to us, too.

Brian Frye has a terrific hint for players of *The Bard's Tale II*, but you must have completed *The Bard's Tale I* and still possess the *The Bard's Tale I* character disk. "When you go into Garth's, place *The Bard's Tale I* character disk in the drive and press the **BUY** key. If you have the money, you can buy a magical item in the realm of *The Bard's Tale II*, including the completed *Destiny* segments."

Hugh Sandgathe of Eugene, Ore., offers several hints for players of Infocom's *Beyond Zork* text adventure. "Remember that lightning has long and short tines. A teleport scroll can help you get out of the cellar if you get stuck. If you brush away the minx's tracks, the hunter will be unable to find it. The unicorn's horn gives you luck if you kiss it; to free the unicorn, give it the chest that says 'Do not open' (but make sure you remove everything first). Squeeze the moss and your dexterity will eventually go up. Levitate the baby hungus out of the mud, and your compassion goes up."

Hugh also offers some terrific tips for *Might and Magic*, a New World Computing offering. "You need a King's Pass to enter

Castle Alamar and a Merchant's Pass to enter the other castles. The Merchant's Pass can be found in some old caravan wagons and the druid Percella has the King's Pass, but she requires a promise from you which you had better not break! An old hermit will trade some old pirate maps to you which will help in finding the pirates' treasure in their coves. The two astral brothers can be found in Port Smith and Algary. There is a magician in Algary who will tell you your immunities, if you're interested."

Ken Wright, of Norristown, Pa., gives *Might and Magic* hints that are quite specific. "Hint #1: The secret of Portsmouth is the Succubus Queen. Hint #2: The button on Castle White Wolfs throne-room wall removes the barrier behind the secret door. Hint #3: The bronze key acts as a detect magic spell. Hint #4: The dragon's tooth acts as a rejuvenate spell."

Scott Stanley offers this tip for *Might and Magic*. "To figure out what ZAM's clue is, first find his astral brother, ZOM. He will give you a set of numbers. You then take the 'C' from ZOM's clue and put them together. You then do the same with the second set. This gives you a location, which you should go to, and you will get something that you need to enter the Minotaur's Lair."

Guy Redlin and Brandon Schreiber, both of Oshkosh, Wis., managed to complete *Might and Magic* with a rating of 427,058! They recommend that players don't waste their time on Alamar's quest, as The Crypt doesn't exist.

Edward Friesema of Pasadena, Calif., is a

true *Ultima* fan and has hints for both *Ultima III* and *IV*. "For *Ultima III*, to reach Ambrosia, go into the whirlpool to find Dawn, and use a gem when the moons are at 0,0 (the dot on the map will disappear at any other moon phase). Beware of the floor tiles in the last room of Exodus's castle as they attack you. When you pass the Silver Serpent, use ships to create a bridge from the castle to the land on the island, then return with a horse."

For *Ultima IV* Ed offers the following clue: "To find out where the wheel is, ask the wounded sailor in the Serpent's Castle about the HMS *Cape*. Talk to the Antos in the three castles about the bell, book, and candle. Walls that have a white dash through the middle can be passed through. To get rid of the Skull of Mondain, use it at the entrance to the Abyss, but nowhere else or you'll instantly lose any partial Avatarhood that you have gained (ask 'Splot' in Magincia about the stone). Occasionally a ghost will appear at the inn in Skara Brae, so talk to it about the white stone."

That's all for this issue. Next month, we'll examine the hottest new program on the market, *Ultima V* from Origin Systems. Please don't forget to mail in your nominations for the finest software game of the year for a given system for the Beasties Awards. Send your vote to:

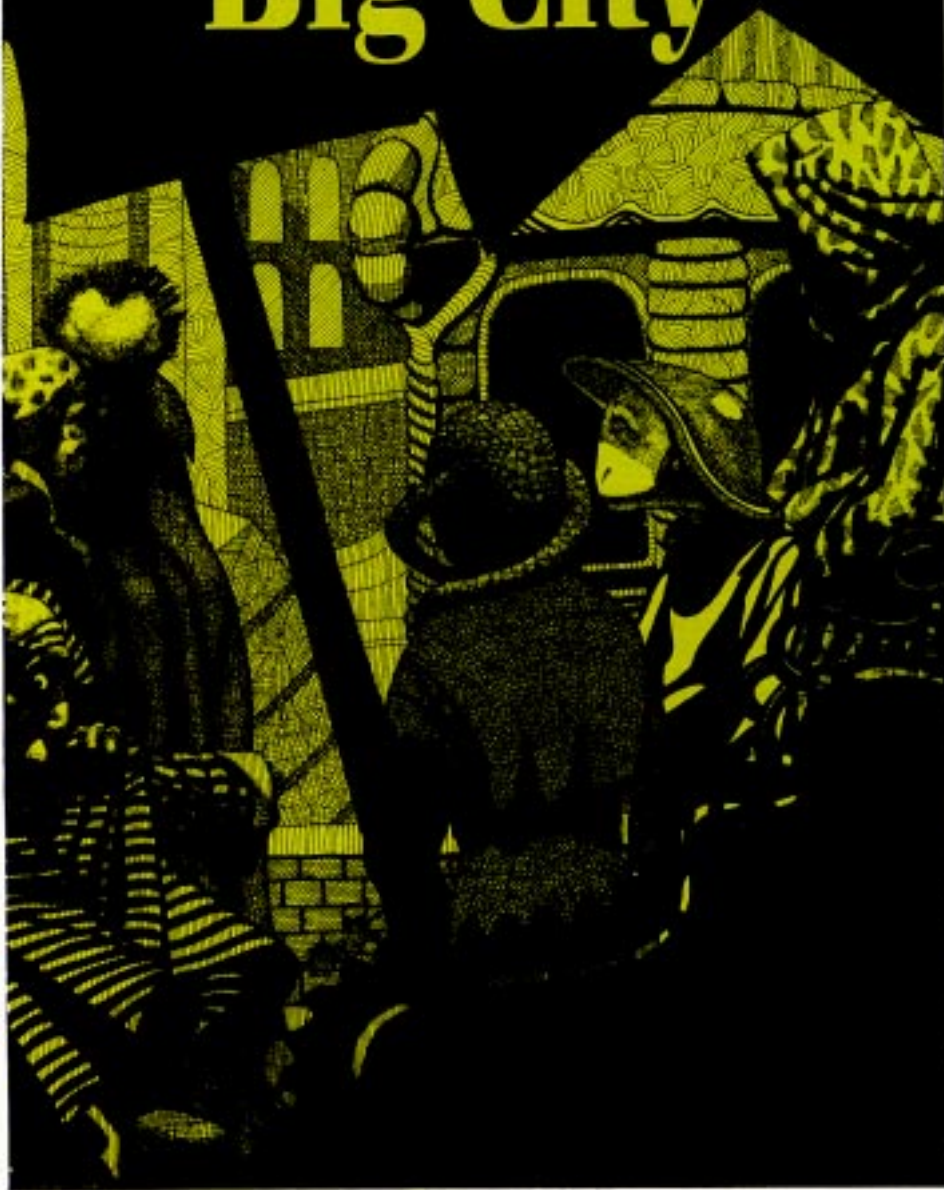
Hartley and Patricia Lesser  
179 Pebble Place  
San Ramon CA 94583

Again, we ask that you forgo the telephone calls. Until next time, game on! ☐



by Dan Kretzer

# Gamma Life in the Big City



*Cities and societies in the  
GAMMA WORLD® game*

In the world of the GAMMA WORLD® game, the word “city” has numerous definitions. It can describe an abandoned deathland (like Pitz Burke), a small tribal community, a large city-state, a Cryptic Alliance base, a free city with no controlled land, or a city of the Ancients that remained intact during the Social Wars. As a rule of thumb, however, most cities of the so-called Gamma World resemble the city-states of old in terms of government, economy, militia, and so forth. Most of these cities are fortified and rely on a feudal form of government (as in the Middle Ages). In some cases, the lands immediately surrounding the city may be claimed as city property and farm land. More ambitious city leaders may claim large tracts of land under the dominion of their own city, which becomes the region’s capital.

Many GMs like to set adventures in either recently abandoned cities or cities of the Ancients that have remained much as they were long ago. It is in these locales that PCs find artifacts and gain information, both of which are enjoyable activities that advance the campaign plot. Adventures in active cities are sadly uncommon in many campaigns because most GMs (veterans as well as beginners) feel that communities are places in which the PCs spend their time doing nothing between adventures. They also mistakenly believe that the Gamma Worlds communities are usually hostile toward all outsiders. These misconceptions stem from a deep-rooted belief that all cities are closed communities, isolated against outsiders in what is perceived as the best way to survive. With regard to survival, nothing could be further from the truth. Most cities actually welcome outsiders for the commerce they bring, which leads to greater wealth.

Inhabitants of the Gamma World’s cities are cautious about welcoming outsiders, but not to the point of firing upon travelers as they approach. The Gamma Worlds urbanites realize that strangers might be members of a more powerful community coming to negotiate an alliance. Allies in the Gamma World are of great value when entire cities are concerned. Consequently, no city avoids the minor risk involved in letting strangers in if it might lead to a better future. Likewise, turning away or killing emissaries could lead to war.

Most city leaders allow ambassadors from other cities to enter their towns, granting audiences to the newcomers to see if they bring terms for a treaty. Consequently, travelers are often allowed into a city simply by saying that they are from a powerful neighboring community or tribe. Such visitors may find themselves entering the role of ambassadors even if they were not officially appointed as such.

Strangers new to an area are often expected to pay entry fees before they are allowed into a city. This payment might be in the form of information, an artifact, or



a sum of currency. As a general rule, most cities will part with small amounts of food and water if it means gaining valuable tools for survival. Once inside the city walls, there is much that PCs can explore – though you have to design it first, of course.

### Creating a city

When setting up an urban area, you should first decide if the city existed prior to the Social Wars, was built afterward, or was built around a military or postholocaust installation. After deciding the city's origin, draft a map of the city. As the focus of this article regards life in the Gamma World's cities, a full-blown discussion of mapping is inappropriate. A DM in need of inspiration may find it by simply consulting any Rand McNally road atlas or a map of his hometown. City-based modules for other fantasy or science-fiction games are also very helpful in creating the specific layout of a Gamma World city. A scale of 1" = 25 meters works best when mapping. The use of blank paper (perhaps with an underlying sheet of graph paper) for city-mapping is suggested; it keeps graph lines from obscuring building walls. Unlike an outpost or installation, a city is rarely built to specification and thus does not always fit well on graph paper.

When running a city adventure, you have two options: the players may be expected to map according to instructions, or you can provide a photocopy of the city map to the players. Since the former case takes a long time and is often confusing, it is better to photocopy the map before numbering important buildings, then give this map to the players and let them fill in the building names and descriptions as they explore the city.

Most cities should be built in naturally defensible areas like peninsulas and mountain tops. Likewise, toxic marshes and radioactive zones provide protection if city inhabitants can find a way to adapt to or protect themselves from these regions.

When designing a Gamma World city, there are a number of other considerations the GM should address prior to conducting the adventure. Some of these considerations follow.

*Political tension:* Hunger for power and control over the lives of others is an unfortunate trait of many people. In a politically unstable environment (e.g., virtually any postholocaust urban setting), there are sure to be some who covet the control held by community leaders. This envy can easily lead to an attempt to influence or seize command from the present rulers. If there is one prime ruler, for example, an ambitious and charismatic character might call the people into revolt in an effort to take command. Elections may also provide tense times in a city. (Of course, some primitive communities may choose leaders by lot, duels to the death, or "divine right.") Examples such as these and others

suggest a multitude of plots in which PCs can become involved. For instance, if a group of PCs decides to rusticate in a barbarian community, they may be chosen in a drawing (which by chance allows visitors to be included as well) as the new tribal leaders. By community law, they may then be challenged to a death duel by other members of the tribe.

*Cryptic alliances:* Some cities are bases for Cryptic Alliances. For reasons mentioned earlier, however, these bases might not always drive off strangers. While the racial alliances often attack those of all opposing races, most alliances allow wayfarers into their cities to rest, buy equipment, or attempt to join the alliance. Cryptic Alliances may also be clandestinely based in more established, law-and-order societies. For example, there may be a Restorationist member in one city's government who secretly influences others to advance the Restorationist cause.

*Racial prejudice:* It is a natural instinct to shy away from outsiders. The same holds true in a Gamma World city. In a city comprised of a Pure Strain Human population, mutants will be shunned to some degree, even if the community is not affiliated with the Knights of Genetic Purity. Environments such as these offer a wealth of role-playing scenarios. For example, if there are members of any of the violent, racially based Cryptic Alliances hiding in a city, PCs may become the victims of racial terrorism or become fall guys for the crimes of the terrorists.

*Ancient culture:* Many communities in the Gamma World are greatly influenced by the cultures of the Ancients, but often in bizarre ways. For example, a primitive community may be built around an Ancient football stadium. The tribe is divided by racial type: Pure Strain Human, humanoid, and mutant animals and plants, each of which has a representative. The mutated animal and plant representatives cannot become the chieftain, but each year the humanoids and Pure Strain Humans dress up in the sacred uniforms of the Jetz and the Jients and engage in a one-hour, hand-to-hand war out on the field, battling for an Ancient football. The winning faction's representative then becomes chief of the entire tribe.

In order to decide what effects Ancient culture has on a city, one must first develop a brief history of the city. Perhaps the people of a city built around an Ancient library are descended from those who took shelter there during the Social Wars. Since the wars ended, the refugees came to call the place home. Their descendants now regard the authors of the books they read as gods or other great powers in the universe. A wide variety of strange religions that originate from beliefs about Ancient culture can spring up in a GAMMA WORLD game campaign.

*Family life:* The way individual families live is important when making a city adventure. You should decide what exactly

constitutes a family in a certain city, and what roles the members of a family typically play. Are family bonds weak or strong? How do families tend to feel about the government? How do they respond to threats? Are families large or small, settled or nomadic?

*General knowledge:* Education in the Gamma World is not rare, as one might expect. Children can certainly learn their parents' crafts. The children in a community also learn a little about the Ancients, especially if the city has an installation of some type in it. Self-defense is taught to all children in the hostile environment of the Gamma World. Such training sharpens dexterity, strength, and constitution above average levels, which is why most PCs have better abilities than peasant NPCs. Thus, in a barbaric, warlike community, characters add a point to each of their physical attributes. To balance this, you may give a character a starting skill if he comes from a less barbaric community.

*Economic structures:* Economic systems are important when designing a city. If a city is communist or socialist, the characters will often deal with agents of the government as opposed to dealing with private individuals. If the city is based on a capitalist structure, the characters have a wider range of services from which to choose and are able to communicate with the people as well as the (often weak) government.

Some cities have no other resource except that they are centers of trade. Cities of this kind are nesting places for all types of NPCs: con men, bandits, pickpockets, smugglers, mercenaries, escaped prisoners and slaves, deserters from different armies, and other riffraff. They are also stopover points for pilgrims, merchants, nomads, crusaders, wandering performers, and noble NPCs. All in all, this type of city is a great melting pot for all types of races, professions, and religions. While the actual number of long-term residents might be small when compared to the number of transients, the size of the city and the average number of people there at any time is tremendous compared to any other cities in the campaign area.

All of the Gamma World's cities should have some form of trade with other communities (unless they are somehow completely self-sufficient). If one city has food and another has water, the two will most likely trade with each other to get the resources they need. These two cities might also look out for each other for the sake of their own interests.

Taxes are placed on all sold goods in any community. This allows the government to benefit from the trade brought by outsiders. Black marketeers and smugglers can avoid this tax by selling through underground networks. This sort of activity, however, should always be conducted at a high risk.

Some cities are run entirely by merchants. In places like these, characters

have an easy time buying and selling goods. There is also a greater availability of rare items in these kinds of cities. Sellers of these items frequent cities like this to hawk their goods. Without the sales tax levied by other cities, these dealers are free to make a greater profit.

Some cities may have prohibitions on certain goods, which are not allowed to be sold by anybody. In fact, most cities won't even allow prohibited items inside city walls. Guns, alcohol, and explosives are examples of items that may be prohibited in a city.

**Utilities:** You must decide if a city has public utilities available to its inhabitants. If so, you should consider what organizations take care of electricity, heating, water, and waste disposal. Furthermore, you will have to decide how these utilities are employed and regulated. In an energy-starved environment, not everyone will have access to power sources. Many of these luxuries are taken for granted by today's urban inhabitants; in a postholocaust city, they become problems. Generally, there will be little or no electricity. Camp fires and fireplaces provide most heat, and a stream or lake of pure water is usually nearby (without a water source, the inhabitants may have to beg, steal, or trade for this commodity). The city may opt to reroute waterways through the city; these may then be used as sewage systems, transport routes, and water supplies. Of course, the ingenious role-player will immediately note the compromising position a city could be placed in if threatened with the contamination of its only source of water. Garbage and other wastes are usually burned or dumped where they (hopefully) cause little trouble to the people of the city.

**Laws and customs:** Every city has certain laws that keep the peace. These laws may take many forms; they may be as complex as our current set of laws or as simple and practical as a set of verbal commandments. For example, a simple set of laws may read as follows: "Do not steal, kill, show disrespect for the city, betray the city for another, or use firearms unless

the city is under siege or you are under fire by terrorists. Do nothing that will hinder the authorities in any way, and always support the city leader's cause." Failure to adhere to these laws could mean imprisonment, flogging, slavery, loss of a limb, or execution.

There are also unwritten laws that are adhered to because of custom, superstition, or religion. For instance, although some societies believe that breaking deals is simply a part of doing business, other societies may look on such actions with great disdain, holding the dealer responsible for an infraction of social custom. Clashes such as these make the game less predictable, and you can choose whatever punishment you wish for those who break these unwritten laws.

Customs are also an important part of a city's character. Many customs can be worked out, although most are based on the customs of the Ancients. For example, in the football-stadium city described previously, "What's the score?" is a common greeting and "Two minute warning" is a common good-bye. Such details add reality and fun to the role-playing of a city adventure.

**Local professions:** In a Gamma World city, there will be a wide variety of professions, as in almost any city anywhere. Given the great power of Ancient devices, stores that sell weapons outright will be rare, but there might be a gun expert or collector who could be persuaded to sell an artifact to the characters. Other technical professions include computer experts, auto mechanics, and robot repairmen. The primitive aspect of the Gamma World also produces blacksmiths, tanners, carpenters, and other craftsmen. Such people are often paid for their services in barter, by giving something they do not have and cannot make. For instance, a PC might give a blacksmith a sack of grain in return for fixing that character's sword.

### Creating urban adventures

Once your Gamma World city has been designed, you are ready to set up adventures in this city. First, you should make a

building key that marks all of the areas that will be of importance to the characters in the adventures (such as the overlord's castle, the guards' barracks, various shops, and the homes of important NPCs). You should also note secretly where there are secret bases, thieves' hideouts, black-market storage areas, and other similar buildings.

Once this is complete, you can devise a random-events chart for the city. Such events can include a terrorist strike, a robbery, an encounter with a special NPC, or other events that might be a part of everyday life in that Gamma World city. Die rolls for these encounters should be made every few march turns (or at least once per day).

The main plot of your city adventure must now be decided. Unlike other types of adventures, a city adventure seldom involves an "explore the unknown" scenario. Rescuing prisoners and escaping from enemy territory are good plots if the city concerned is hostile, but there's more to city adventuring than that. To create a good adventure in a friendly city, you should be creative and think of ideas that are exciting without being excessively violent. Go through the following steps:

1. Decide who the villains are going to be. Possibilities include corrupt officials, black marketeers, thieves, power-hungry scientists, unknowns seeking political power, and so on. Some villains might be inanimate things, such as nuclear reactors on the verge of meltdown, terrorist bombs hidden somewhere in a large city, or even plagues that must be kept out of the area. The Canopus plague in *The Albuquerque Starport* minimodule is a good disease for this type of city adventure because its victims are compelled to spread the disease, not isolate it.

2. Find a way to introduce the characters to the plot, giving them the proper incentive to complete it. Rumors, which are common with exploration scenarios, are not always necessary in city adventures. If a pack of zombies with Canopus plague are pounding on the city gates, it's not likely to be a subject that is merely gossiped about. In a city, news travels fast. Often, an adventure can begin as soon as the characters walk into a city and talk with a friendly guard; actual encounters lead the characters into the adventure. If the group happens to be in the wrong dark alley during a moonless night, they may witness a murder or similar happening that could get them embroiled in their next adventure. Even if the characters do not want to become involved with the city's organized crime gang, they may not be able to avoid it if the gang decides that all witnesses need to be rubbed out.

3. Set up a series of planned encounters designed to further the adventure's plot. Such encounters should involve the lead villain, one of his minions, or an NPC who knows something that will help the characters. Any combat in these encounters

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## Empires of the Sands

by Scott Haring

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should seldom exceed the hand-to-hand level and should only rarely involve loud, destructive weapons. If any of the villains have mental-attack mutations, they will use them instead of destructive weapons.

In these set encounters, the players should be able to find various clues about who the head villain is. Sensory mutations should aid the characters in the discovery of such clues. Any clues that you have the bad guys drop should lead the characters to the next planned encounter.

4. Present the characters with the final conflict. This should be a confrontation (but not necessarily combat) with the main villain. The characters should discover the general nature of this antagonist and his motives. If you care to make a sequel to this adventure, have the NPC villain escape in some unique manner (if all else fails, use a unique mutation or technological device to accomplish this). You could even have the characters confront an innocent person whose body has been taken over by mental control.

One possible city adventure follows, designed for PCs who like a lot of activity (i.e., combat and thinking). The assumed reactions of the party are given, though of course different PC groups will rarely react in the same ways.

The day after the characters arrive in a large city, bombs start going off in crowded buildings and streets. Since the characters are new in town, they are the immediate suspects. Then the group notices a suspicious robed man carrying a box. He sets the box by a fountain in the center of the town and leaves. Minutes later, the box explodes.

When the PCs report the bomber, the captain of the guards refuses to believe them, thinking they are trying to clear their own names. Soon, the PCs give up and leave. As they head back to the inn, they see the bomber again on a crowded street and begin pursuit. They chase him through the city to a locked warehouse, where he sneaks through a small hole in the wall. Before the PCs can follow, they are arrested for breaking and entering. After spending the night in jail, they return to the warehouse and discover the entry hole. They discover a large supply of explosives and detonators stored there. Obviously, the mad bomber has made this location his manufacturing area. The party decides to lay an ambush for the bomber.

When the villain returns, the party attacks. Upon subduing the villain, the party discovers that he is a powerful, heavily armored humanoid who, when captured, admits to being a member of the Red Death. Before the characters can turn him in, however, he breaks free and jumps down a hole in the floor of the warehouse. The characters follow him down and find themselves involved in a game of cat-and-mouse played in a massive complex of natural caverns. The NPC has set up a network of traps and pitfalls, and the PCs find they are entrapped in an entirely new

adventure setting in which one mistake could mean instant death. The PCs still have the chance to resolve the adventure by capturing the bomber or slaying him.

This example shows how the scenario is established and how it can lead to more adventures. Will the PCs clear their names? What will they do with the explosives they've found? Where do the caverns lead? What else lives down here?

It is a good idea to place subplots into an adventure to lead the PCs into future adventures. Depending upon your preference, these subplots may or may not have anything to do with the current adventure. For instance, in one adventure, a character may find a jeweled pendant on one of the villains. Chances are that he will take the item and soon forget about it. A few adventures later, he may remember the item and inspect it, discovering a small button. He presses the button. When nothing happens, he simply forgets about the pendant again. About a week later, an alien spacecraft lands and informs him that they were sent to pick him up and return him to his home planet. Of course, thousands of adventures can spring from this subplot.

### Special NPCs

The use of special NPCs is absolutely necessary to good city adventures. In the case of the mad bomber, the villain's description and statistics may take up two or more pages. Such depth of description and detail adds to the richness of the NPC. Of course, the mad bomber is not the only special NPC in the adventure; the captain of the guards plays an important secondary role. A number of other minor NPCs could help lead to the eventual confrontation with the main villain.

When created, NPCs should be played according to their abilities. A fast character is not going to try to fight a PC on a city street and risk getting caught; he's going to run instead. A smart character isn't going to make stupid errors every five minutes just to give the PCs a break. When being pursued through the caverns, the mad bomber (whose intelligence is 16)


doesn't try to fight the characters every time he runs into them; he tries to hide or lead them into traps he has set. Only once does he directly fight the characters, in a confrontation left till the climax of the adventure. This final conflict is what the adventure has been leading to all along. Although the plot lacks heavy, weapon-intensive combat excitement, there may be plenty of underground mutants in the caverns to fight the PCs.

When faced with an intelligent adversary, the PCs are more inclined to treat him seriously and think harder for a solution to their current dilemma. In the end, the characters may finally catch up with the NPC by using their brains instead of their brawn. In the previous example, the PCs could beat the mad bomber at his own game by setting traps for him as well.

Monsters and NPCs should be vividly described. Give memorable details on all physical characteristics, as well as mental and emotional attributes. Consider the following description: "Suddenly, a large, green-furred beast crashes through the bushes. With batlike wings unfolding, he glides toward you. His whipping tail extends back and over his head; there is a glimmering stinger on its tip. His bared and bloody fangs indicate an angry disposition." Colorful descriptions like these give the players a better impression of exactly what they are up against, adding to the immediacy of the encounter.

The opinions, disposition, personality, hatreds, affections, goals, and motives of an NPC all depend upon the way he was brought up. If raised in a community overrun by Red Death terrorists, an NPC isn't likely to have much concern for the lives of others. If that same NPC was raised in a monastery, though, he will be an entirely different person.


Some NPCs are dedicated to a cause, either because they were brought up that way or were converted (or brainwashed) at some point in later life. A character's dedication to a cause depends on how strictly he was raised. A good GM can decide just what type of personality an NPC will have by quickly devising that



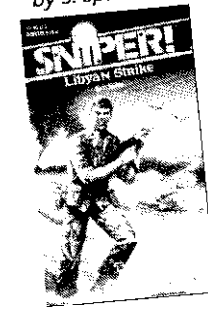
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NPC's background and deciding how past events have shaped his character. Such details in an NPC cannot be overlooked by the players, and they will surely enjoy role-playing their characters alongside a well-made NPC.

It is especially important for villains to be carefully constructed, using logic and reason. Villains are not merely killing machines. Consider the following example:

Mandrake is a mutated human with mediocre ability scores, the only exception being an intelligence of 14. He has 40 hit points and the following mutations: *economic genius capability*, *mental control*, *pyrophobia*, and *weather manipulation*. This NPC seems very weak and boring, with one defect for his three good mutations. Indeed, he could probably be destroyed by any self-respecting PC party and would probably not make a great villain. But let's put him in a capitalistic city and give him a history before we trash him as a villain.

Mandrake was born in the city of Hilmarsh, 27 years ago. When Mandrake was 12, a Purist wormed his way onto the throne and immediately ordered the destruction of all mutants, who at the time were a small minority in this particular city. This leader told all sorts of stories about a worldwide mutant conspiracy and how they planned to take over the Earth. The guards followed his orders and slew all of Hilmarsh's humanoids. Mandrake escaped the massacre and fled north, where he joined a barbarian tribe.

Over the next 15 years, Hilmarsh threw the Purists out of power and out of the city. At present, the mutant population is still struggling to rebuild its niche in this city. Recently, Mandrake returned as well, thinking that his humanlike form is a perfect disguise. To his surprise, he found that there were other mutants living in Hilmarsh, but he believed that they were mentally enslaved and discriminated against. Enraged by this, he vowed to exact revenge by creating an economic disaster. Using his special genius, he figured out a way to use his other mutations to spoil crops and turn incoming merchants away from the region. With his initial effects having proven successful, Mandrake has now satisfied his revenge, and Hilmarsh is having great economic troubles. Nevertheless, Mandrake continues to destroy crops and otherwise punish Hilmarsh.

Mandrake has now become a worthwhile villain (as well as good material for the Iron Society) and his motives are reasonable and understandable. He now presents the PCs with a fitting villainy — one which will require much effort from the PCs to overcome. The physical weaknesses of Mandrake no longer matter since he is shrouded in secrecy. Furthermore, the general direction the plot takes will depend completely upon how the PCs interpret the clues that you present regarding Mandrake's identity and plans.

## Society, cities, and PCs

When PCs start off, they begin as two-dimensional sheets of statistics. As they go through adventure after adventure, however, they develop certain personal attributes and behavior patterns that make them individuals. When players create their characters, they usually have some idea ahead of time about what character type they wish to run. Some players prefer big, strong, bone-crushing combatants; others like the clever, golden-tongued con men; still others prefer the high-tech wizard. These and other personal traits become more evident as the player runs his character over a period of several adventures.

To help develop the personality of a character, it is a good idea to sketch out some details about the character's past life. To do this, you must decide upon several general details about the character. These details include: where the character is from; what type of social position the character's family holds; why the character took up adventuring; what the character hopes to gain from adventuring; how the character was brought up; and what occurred in the character's early life to affect his opinions, morals, and outlook.

To answer these questions, you must confer with the player and decide upon the answers with him. Players should not have to decide their pasts for themselves (if so, their PCs will probably come from a tech level IV communities and be the sons and daughters of the communities' leaders). By the same token, however, you shouldn't shoulder this task without the help and input of the PC; a GM has enough creative control in the entire campaign world. The PC, though, is the only creative outlet for the player. Consequently, the player should have the most input on what type of character he is playing.

If you have the time and the players are willing, it is a good idea to run each PC through two or three short solo adventures before that PC meets the others. This gives experience and knowledge that none of the others have, and it allows a group of characters from different cities and backgrounds to join together, each bringing memories of his past along.

The following are examples of what PCs with creative histories can be like at the start of the campaign. Each also shows the effects of society (and, in Bagard's case, city life) on that PC.

**Arturo:** Arturo is a Pure Strain Human who was born in a tech level I tribe of Pure Strain Human nomads who wandered the campaign area of Metrop. Arturo was taught by his warrior father that self-preservation was the key to life. During Arturo's 18th year, a group of Mutationists raided and wiped out his tribe. His animal instincts allowed him to survive. During his escape, he saw several mutants weeping over a fallen loved one. He cared little about the deaths of his parents and fellow tribe members, but was upset that he was

now on his own and it was because of a group of mutants.

As one might guess, Arturo hates all mutants and feels them to be weak of heart, remembering the mutants who mourned for their friend. His goals in adventuring are to survive as long as possible and to kill all mutants, ridding the world of the weak-hearted fools. He admires cities and high-tech installations, finding them to be easy and efficient methods of survival, but he prefers being a loner because he does not like endangering himself for the good of others.

In my campaign, Arturo played through two or three solo adventures, then tried to join the Purists. In the initiation, he was severely wounded and was thrown out by the Cryptic Alliance. He was starving and hurt when he was found and aided by the remaining PCs, three of whom were humanoids. Despite his original racial hatred and his desire to be alone, he soon became a member of the party and dropped his hatred of humanoids shortly after they had saved his life a few times.

**Bagard Sorenson:** Bagard Sorenson, a humanoid character, was born in a tech II city of mixed races, where wealth was all-important. Being of low strength, intelligence, and social class (but high in dexterity), he lived his early life as a thief, the same profession held by the rest of his family. When a new overlord decided to rid the city of thieves by increasing security and intensifying punishment, Bagard's parents and siblings were captured and hanged. Bagard quickly changed his ways and joined up with a caravan, running a shell game.

Bagard's player went through a few solo adventures as well. In the first adventure, he was caught cheating at his game and was chased away from the caravan by his victims. The next couple of solo adventures were built around his escape from his pursuers. When I decided to have this PC join the rest, I simply had him stumble across the party's path. They helped him when the mutant whom Bagard had cheated showed up, and he has adventured with the group ever since.

Bagard is not likely to have any particular racial prejudices, nor will he have strong opinions about any particular governments (except for the one that executed his family). It is likely that he would make a good scout and spy for the party. Sorenson also has a good knowledge of how the underworld works and can smell a con game a mile away.

## Conclusion

The cities and societies of the Gamma World deserve important roles in all campaigns. If you take the time to flesh out several cities in your game world and set a few adventures in them, you'll see what I mean. The postholocaust society you envision, if carefully detailed, adds tremendously to the excitement and fun of your GAMMA WORLD game campaign. Ω



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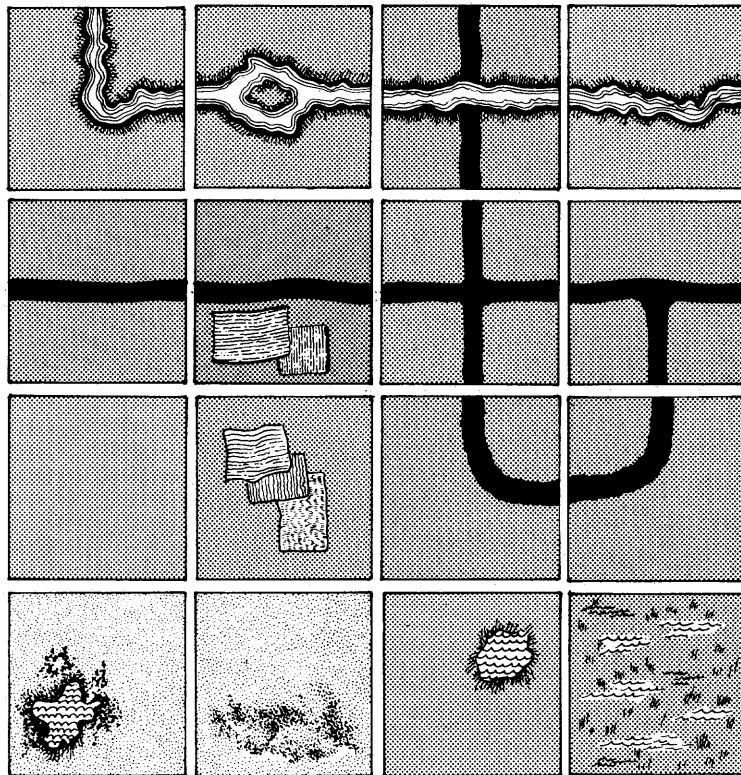
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# Role-playing Reviews



## *The urban life — fantasy style*

Black smoke hung low over the city. The stench of unwashed bodies and open drains drifted through the great gates.

"Four gold? You want four gold pieces before you'll let us enter the city?" Garrik's hand dropped to his sword hilt as he shouted at the guard. "It's daylight robbery! I refuse to pay!"

The guard rubbed his chin and

motioned to the armored figures within the gatehouse. Within seconds, the gate-way was blocked by members of the city guard. As the guards' halberds were raised in thrusting positions toward the two adventurers, peasants waiting to enter the city scattered in all directions.

The dark-haired woman in robes by Garrik's side quickly interposed herself

between Garrik and the guard. "My friend is a little excitable," she said quickly, but with a smile. "He's from Tossland, you know. They're ignorant of civilized ways down there. I'm Janna the Sorceress."

"Hey!" Garrik roared. "I'm not ignorant! I just want—"

Before he could finish, Janna reached back and grabbed his arm. "Shut up," she whispered, still smiling at the guard. "You want to walk in here or be buried here?"

The guard looked carefully at the adventurers. "Four gold. Pay up or get lost."

Janna dug into her purse. "Here, here's ten. Have a drink on us when you get off duty." After having their names taken by a scribe, the two wayfarers passed the gates and entered the crowded city.

"This place stinks." Garrik's nose wrinkled up in disgust. "My dad's pigsty smells better than this." A small figure bumped into Garrik as he moved to avoid street traffic.

"F'give me, m'lord!" the child gasped. "Th' wagon a'most ran over me! Didn't mean ya harm." The young boy looked fearfully up at Garrik's muscled form.

"It's all right, lad," the man replied, smiling. "Just get out of my way."

As the boy melted back into the crowd, Garrik's eyes lit up. "Maybe city life won't be too bad after all. Look, a jeweller's shop. And it hasn't got any guards!" It was easy to see what was on his mind.

"I knew it was a mistake to travel with a barbarian," Janna said to no one in particular. She tugged at Garrik's sleeve and pointed towards a nearby tavern. "Let's go have a drink."

"Yeah. Then we'll knock over the jewellers! I'll buy the first — Hey! Where's my purse?"

A village is able to grow into a town and then into a city for one good reason: trade. Every city depends on trade. Food must be brought in from the countryside to feed the teeming masses, so manufactured goods are shipped out to pay for the food and to gain goods from other urban centers. To facilitate trade, cities are often found on the banks of a river or along a coastline, the water providing an efficient means of transport.

Trade makes the city the place to go for goods, services, and entertainment unavailable in the pastoral countryside. As a center of power and resources, a city attracts wealthy people of noble birth — and those who have gained their wealth in other ways. The city offers social advancement, opportunities for people to spend their earnings, and numerous ways to earn those earnings, both honest and dishonest. All types of characters can be found in cities: rich merchants, powerful nobles, hardworking artisans and laborers, devout clerics, studious magic-users, warriors, thieves, and more low-life scum than you can imagine, each looking to the city to meet his individual needs.



The thief character class in particular comes onto its own in the city. There are always plenty of rich pockets to pick and wealthy residences to burgle, as well as plenty of watchmen to flee from. Yet the city is often no place for free-lance operatives. Only members of the thieves' guild are allowed to ply their trade in some towns; anyone else who steals for a living is asking for trouble.

But where there's chaos, there's also order. Day and night, patrols of watchmen scour the streets to catch or deter wrongdoers and to make the city safe for decent folk. Still, many a man has been found in the gray light of dawn, lying face down in the gutter with a knife between his ribs, and many an adventurer has arrived in a tavern only to find her purse considerably lighter than when she set out. Nothing is predictable in a city.

Sooner or later, all adventurers reach town. Whether the PCs' mission is to pick up supplies or find work, whether the city encounter is an integral part of a larger adventure or just a brief tour, the adventurers will find themselves in a new and dangerous setting. Adventurers accustomed to lording their strength over the peasants or stomping everything they meet in the dungeon or wilderness could be in for a shock when they enter a city's gates. Cities are, by their very nature, organized places, ruled by powerful characters, patrolled by vigilant guards, and strengthened by mighty guilds. Cities curtail the actions of their citizens to maintain order and security. Brawling in the streets is frowned upon and often actively discouraged. Robbery and murder are serious offenses guaranteed to make life hard for free-wheeling adventurers.

City adventures have to be approached with a degree of caution. You can't run amok through the city like you can through a dungeon; the town watch takes a very dim view of indiscriminate violence. Adventurers can't even knock over the local evil sorcerer's den just because he's doing despicable things in his spare time. He may be evil and rotten to the core, but chances are that he does not lack influence with the city's rulers or other powerful interest groups. Do you let him carry on with his sinister plans? No — but you've got to be careful. If this fiend was hanging out in an isolated citadel in the wilderness, you could burst in, defeat his guards, negate his magical traps, nail the swine, then escape into the safety of the countryside. But in a city, the watch could turn up at any time, making it impossible to stage a clean getaway. Then, too, the city authorities may take a very dim view of you if you attack someone they consider to be a respectable citizen.

But don't let that deter you, or you'll miss out on some of the best role-playing experiences around. Cities offer adventures that are much more than pure combat. Sure, you can just waltz into a place and lay waste with a carefully placed

*fireball*, but is that what you really want? You could instead be drawn into the intrigue between two rival factions, pull off the greatest heist since Conan was around, or spend a few weeks of high living as you burn through your hard-earned money.

Cities offer their own distinctive challenges, both simple and complicated. In a city with thousands of inhabitants, someone is always going to want something done, whether it's acting as a night watchman or breaking into a warehouse. The streets are alive: runaway horses and wagons to avoid or catch, thieves dipping into your pocket, clerics out to convert you to their faiths, and corrupt officials trying to squeeze you for as much as they can. And what better place to hear rumors of hidden treasure hoards and news of foreign lands than in a busy city inn? Cities are an ideal place to spend your loot on essential adventuring equipment or consumer durables. ("It's the finest Talorian silk, my lady; it could have been made just for you. Look how it makes your eyes sparkle! A bargain at only 500 gold.") Or you could find a jeweller who specializes in very expensive gems and jewelry; there, you can convert your gold pieces into more easily portable items or cash in that huge diamond you've been lugging around for months to get more readily exchangeable gold pieces.

### The ideal urban setting

From a player's point of view, there may be no such thing as an ideal urban setting. ("Hey, I'm a druid! I'm not going into a smelly city filled with grasping merchants and the scum of the earth. Give me the wide, open spaces and the fresh feel of the forests. You can keep your smoke-filled streets.") But from a game master's viewpoint, urban settings have a lot to offer in the types of adventures that may be run within a town's confines.

What makes an ideal urban setting? For starters, an urban setting must be atmospheric. It must have a distinctive feel that sets that town apart from all others; otherwise, all urban settings are going to look the same to the players. To get this distinctive feel, urban settings must consist of more than a city map and descriptions of its buildings. An urban setting should be vibrant and feel real, and should impress everyone with its background and layout. It should have its own internal logic and must be a campaign setting in miniature. A zoo-style dungeon above ground is not a city. The hidden city of Suderham in A1-4 *Scourge of the Slave Lords* definitely feels right, as does Glantri City in GAZ3 *The Principalities of Glantri*. These cities have both been designed to fit into and enhance their specific backgrounds, and this design consideration has molded these cities into satisfying settings for urban role-playing. How do other stand-alone urban settings shape up when it comes to providing

convincing and interesting adventure settings?

### CITY-STATE OF THE INVINCIBLE OVERLORD™

An OVERLORD™ city supplement  
Mayfair Games, Inc. \$25.00

Original design: Robert Bledsoe and Bill Owen

New design: Jeff R. Leason

Additional material: Troy Denning

Editing: Thomas Cook, Jonatha Ariadne Caspian, and Jacqueline Leeper

Back in 1976, during the dawn of fantasy role-playing, Judges Guild released the *City State of the Invincible Overlord*, a large, rambling urban complex stuffed full of all kinds of creatures and encounters. The original City State came with its own campaign setting which featured a dwarven fortress-town, Thunderhold. The setting and city reflected its early origins in a number of ways: The city was eclectic, including a wide range of religions and a great diversity in its racial composition. Here, lizardmen and trolls rubbed shoulders with humans, dwarves, and elves. The encounter tables included harpies, shadows, wights, mind flayers, and golems — hardly the types of monsters you would expect to meet in a civilized city. The city also lacked any kind of index, making it a nightmare for the GM to run.

Confused PC: "Excuse me, sir. Could you direct me to the nearest armorer?"

Peasant: "Yeah, er, sure." [A five-minute delay then follows as the GM desperately stares at the City State maps, hoping that one of the armorers will pop out.] Er, I'm sure I saw one earlier today. Maybe it was on Ox-Cart Road."

Confused PC: "Thank you, kind sir. We'll head down Ox-Cart Road and ask another passer-by. Here's one. Oh, sir!"

New Peasant: [Groan.] "Hang on while I check my map; I'm new here. Ah! Here it is, down the street and take the first left. You can't miss it. Phew!"

While having these design flaws, the City State also had its own unique charm. The game master's map was huge: four large sheets that totally dominated the playing area and which required careful shuffling to avoid giving too much away to the players. Long streets and winding alleys covered the maps, promising hidden areas of mystery and adventure. Even the most diligent group of adventurers were unlikely to ever properly identify every building. The sheer magnitude of the City State meant that large numbers of buildings were simply not described, but could be filled in by the GM required.

Various rumors were available from the inhabitants of the buildings, making the City State an ideal place for any adventuring group. Using the city as their base of operations, adventurers could pick up a rumor or two, head out on an adventure, then come back to spend their loot. Once the adventurers returned home, there was

no shortage of places in which to buy exotic goods or otherwise squander riches on well-earned rest and relaxation.

But those were the old days. Now, this setting has been revised and published by Mayfair Games as a boxed set. On the surface, it's an impressive-looking package, consisting of a four-page introduction, an 80-page Map and Population Book, a 32-page Background and Encounter Book, a large full-color map with a city on one side and the island campaign setting on the other, a large Players' Map, a 16-page adventure booklet, four eight-page City Guides, four eight-page Race Guides, and two plastic overlay sheets for regulating city and wilderness travel. Upon ripping through the shrink-wrap, however, the initial excitement soon gives way to disappointment. For underneath the glossy presentation lies a badly conceived urban setting.

Gone are the winding alleys and jumbled buildings, now replaced by a pretty but unconvincing suburban playground. Buildings stand in their own spacious grounds, making the city look like nothing more than a sprawling village enclosed by stout stone walls. No longer are there alleys to get mugged in after dark. Gone are the overcrowded streets. This city is a town-planner's dream. As such, it is hardly the stuff of a bustling fantasy city. The campaign setting is equally thin and uninspired. It consists of a large island with a plateau in the middle, on which sits the city. A few mountains and forests have been slung in to add a bit of variety, but it's far from exciting.

The background, from the Background and Encounter Book provided by Troy Denning, is something else. It's vibrant and there's *something* happening — but does the City-State stand in isolation to its surroundings? While the background now places the City-State, renamed Briarwood, in a campaign setting (Calandia) in which dark forces threaten the country's very existence, this seems to have little impact on the city itself. The Overlord is concerned about the threat and is taking measures to counter it, but as far as, his actions affect the city's personality, the Overlord might as well be contemplating his next bath. As it stands, the city exists on its own, with its background seemingly tacked on as an afterthought. According to the background, thousands of refugees pour into the city, plague stalks the streets, corpses choke the river, and monsters pop up for a quick rampage — yet the city itself seems relatively unaffected by these occurrences. True, a few of the encounters feature a chimera or a medusa, but these are nothing more than random events chucked in to give the PCs something to hack at.

The rest of the random encounters are equally uninspiring. Consisting of little more than pieces of read-aloud text and some statistics, they convey none of the atmosphere of the city. If you take a

dungeon, fill it with a bunch of wandering monsters, and stick it above ground, you'll get a good idea of what these encounters are all about.

In the Map and Population Book, we get down to the backbone of the city. Are you looking for information on how the city operates, what its daily routines are like, and how its various power groups interact with each other and with outsiders? Forget it. What you get are some badly drawn building plans, information on who lives in them, and the characters' statistics. You might need this information if your PCs enjoy rushing into places and attacking the inhabitants; otherwise, it doesn't convey much in the way of how to handle these encounters.

The City-State also suffers in the religion department. Instead of presenting a consistent pantheon, the designer has opted for a wander through the AD&D® *Legends & Lore* book. Here, we have Egyptian and Greek deities rubbing shoulders with the gods of Japan, Central America, North America, the Vikings, the Celts, and the Indian subcontinent. Some of these I can accept as being worshiped in the same area, but such a wide diversity is simply staggering in its mish-mash of cultures and beliefs. It is yet another example of how the City-State lacks a cohesive atmosphere.

The four City Guides are designed to ease players into their first visit to the City-State, and each includes a list of buildings likely to be of interest to various character classes. The guides also include calendars indicating when various festivals take place. These interesting additions give the PCs some places to go when they enter the city. The Race Books are . . . well, it's really up to you how you view these. If you like the idea of having powerful pixie, centaur, naga, and lizardman characters in your campaign, then these have something to recommend them. If you don't want such PCs, or you prefer them to be a bit more balanced with respect to other character classes, then the books are not even worth a glance.

The adventure, "To Catch a Thief," features an investigative situation wherein the PCs attempt to free a man accused of a crime he did not commit. While the basic plot is acceptable and serves to introduce a group of adventurers to the City-State, it could have been better presented.

**Evaluation:** The revised CITY-STATE OF THE INVINCIBLE OVERLORD set is a good example of how not to go about designing a city. It lacks a cohesive feel, and any atmosphere the City-State may have had is lost in a mass of individual location descriptions. Ten years ago, this would have been acceptable; today, it's lackluster and boring. Instead of rectifying the faults of the original, Mayfair has amplified them. But all is not lost; the new City-State does have one redeeming feature — an index. This boxed set is available from: Mayfair Games, Inc., PO. Box 48539, Niles IL 60648, U.S.A.

## **LANKHMAR™ City of Adventure**

An AD&D® game city supplement  
TSR, Inc.

\$12.00

**Design:** Bruce Nesmith, Douglas Niles, and Ken Rolston

**Additional research:** Steve Mecca

**Editing:** Anne Gray McCready and Barbara Green Deer

This is more like it: a city that is full of atmosphere and has a distinctive character. However, Lankmar's character is also one of its weaknesses, as the city is very closely tied to the world and characters created by novelist Fritz Leiber. This makes it hard to fit this supplement into a more conventional AD&D game setting, but more about this later.

The LANKHMAR city supplement consists of a 96-page book, a large full-color map of the city, and a 32-page booklet with geomorphs, district maps, a DM's player-character roster, and five pregenerated player characters drawn from the stories. It's a living and breathing city, a place where Leiber's heroes Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser can really feel at home. In his Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser books, Fritz Leiber described the city of Lankmar in an entertaining and believable fashion. Living here are all manner of rogues, charlatans, and adventurers. The supplement's designers have done an excellent job of capturing the atmosphere of the city; you can almost smell the smoke and stench as you read through the supplement's main book.

The map of Lankmar depicts a crowded city with roads and alleys winding around the houses. In the middle of each city block is a large blank area that represents the narrow backstreets of Lankmar, those areas about which the casual passer-by knows nothing. It is only after leaving the main streets and venturing into the inner areas of Lankmar that these areas become known to the PCs. Whenever the PCs venture into the backstreets, the GM selects one of the 12 geomorphs to fill the empty area. Each geomorph shows the layout of buildings in the backstreets, and with the aid of the random Building and NPC Generator Charts, it's a simple matter to populate the area during play. The inclusion of sample floor plans makes it easy to describe the interior of any building entered unexpectedly by the PCs. Alternatively, if you know that you're going to be running an adventure in the backstreets of Lankmar, one of the geomorphs can be prepared in advance, complete with detailed NPCs and room descriptions.

Instead of being full of seemingly endless descriptions of buildings, the LANKHMAR pack focuses on describing the various areas of the city and the people who inhabit them. The city is therefore easily accessible and easy to use. Each city district is given a piece of descriptive text which sets the tone of the area, and important or typical buildings are

described. Most buildings are therefore not detailed at all, allowing you to personalize the city as much as desired. This is what the LANKHMAR pack is all about: an opportunity for GMs to create their own city in as much detail as they desire. And let's face it: You're never going to need every building detailed. Most of the time, the PCs will just be traveling along the main streets on their way to somewhere else. Only in those areas where the PCs live or which are planned as specific adventure locations are you going to need any real idea of who actually lives there. The feel of the city streets is far more important than endless descriptions of buildings and their functions.

Does helping to design a city seem like a daunting task for a DM? Relax. There's enough background here to make it really easy. Descriptions of guilds, prominent NPCs, Lankhmar's gods, the military, and essays on life in the city get you into the atmosphere; as an added bonus, they're fun to read as well. If the PCs leave the city, the background on the world of Nehwon can be used to design adventures outside of the city walls.

The LANKHMAR pack is not without a few problems: There is no Rainbow Palace flow chart for conducting fights and chases in the palace, no Nehwon wandering monster encounter chart (although this is referenced twice in the book), and no new spells that were promised for spell-casters. It's a pity that these sections are missing, but as they are far from essential, their omission is more of a minor annoyance than a devastating goof. A few areas in which the LANKHMAR pack could have been improved include referencing the district maps so that it's easy to flick from the large players' map to the smaller district maps, and by the addition of an index of establishments and important NPCs.

**Evaluation:** With its flexible and easy-to-use system for detailing the city, the LANKHMAR pack is easily one of the best city supplements ever published, but it is also limited in its use. To be used to full effect, it must be placed fully within Leiber's world. This is a world with lots of charm, excitement, and humor, but it is certainly not your average AD&D game world. With no dwarves, elves, or half-ings, and with magic much more restricted than is usually the case, the LANKHMAR pack is unique but narrow in scope. It takes a long, long time to cast spells in the world of Nehwon, making spell-casters much less effective and leaving them vulnerable to physical attacks. These rules could easily be ignored, but by doing so, a lot of the flavor of the original city of Lankhmar will be lost. So, we have an excellent city pack that doesn't fit very easily into mainstream AD&D game play — a situation that tends to mark the LANKHMAR pack as an inspirational reference work rather than a living and breathing city. This is, of course, unless you're a

big Leiber fan who enjoys thief- and fighter-oriented adventures; in this case, LANKHMAR is a dream come true.

### *Carse*

A generic FRPG city supplement  
Chaosium, Inc. \$8.95  
Design: Stephen Abrams, April Abrams,  
and Midkemia Press  
Additional material, editing, and layout:  
Lynn Willis

*Carse* was originally published by Midkemia Press and is now available from Chaosium as part of their *Universal Supplement Series*, a series of generic role-playing aids which also include *Cities* (see the "Short and sweet" review in DRAGON® Magazine #124). The pack is designed for use with all fantasy role-playing systems, but fits in best with the D&D®, the AD&D, and Chaosium's RUNEQUEST® games. It consists of a 56-page book and a large players' map.

The layout is easy to use, with each part of the city being presented as an area map annotated with each building's function. More detailed descriptions of each of the buildings within an area are found on the facing and following pages. As in the CITY-STATE OF THE INVINCIBLE OVERLORD set, the designers have opted to sacrifice size in favor of detailed descriptions of every building in the city. *Carse* therefore weighs in as a small city with large open areas between the buildings.

But *Carse* comes across as a much more cohesive whole than the City-State. The three religions worshipped in the town, while not being greatly detailed, are believable; they fit in with the city's distinctive medieval feel. The background information is not particularly extensive, but it does an adequate job of providing a solid backdrop to the city. A more thorough integration of the background into the descriptions of the city would give *Carse* a more dynamic flavor. As it stands, *Carse* is really a door-to-door guide to the city's buildings and its individual inhabitants. The index is, however, very thorough, making it easy to find any type of establishment that a group of adventurers is likely to visit.

The random encounter tables consist of various NPCs that the PCs are likely to meet while they wander the streets. These encounters, while containing colorful NPCs, give few hints as to how the NPCs are likely to react to the PCs, and it is left up to the GM to decide how to use any encountered character. More staging tips would have gone a long way toward making these encounters more vibrant. For more generic street encounters, the GM is referred to the tables in the *Cities* book.

**Evaluation:** Even though *Carse* follows the rather mundane route of describing every dwelling, it does so in a more convincing way than the CITY-STATE OF THE INVINCIBLE OVERLORD set, painting a picture of a believable fantasy city. If more

attention had been paid to describing the atmosphere of the city and if tips on how to bring it to life were provided, *Carse* would be a very good pack. As it stands, *Carse* provides a good starting point for GMs willing to add the needed work to bring the city to life. *Carse* is available from: Chaosium, Inc., P.O. Box 6302, Albany CA 94706-0302, U.S.A.

### *Tulan of the Isles*

A generic FRPG city supplement  
Chaosium, Inc. \$8.95  
Design: Raymond Feist, Stephen Abrams,  
April Abrams, Midkemia Press, and  
William Dunn  
Divine intervention: Lynn Willis and Char-  
lie Krank  
Graphic design: William Dunn

*Tulan of the Isles* is another Midkemia Press and Chaosium collaboration. The town of Tulan is set in the same campaign area as *Carse*, and it is directly under the sway of the Baron of *Carse*. This 64-page book (with fold-out map) has the same easy-to-use format as *Carse* and draws upon the same background. It devotes more space to town organization and structure, giving the town a livelier feel than that possessed by *Carse*. This is further enhanced by a look at what a group of adventurers is likely to do in Tulan. This provides a good starting point for GMs using the town as the base of operations for their adventuring group and serves to orient the town to suit the needs of the adventurers, rather than being just a collection of buildings. The sections dealing with a party's first entrance into town also help create atmosphere and bring the town to life.

Tulan of the Isles is marked by a feud between two of the town's powerful families: the Mangrums and Woodhews. This is a feud that can spill over into street brawls at any time — one that gives the town a distinctive character and provides plenty of opportunities for the adventurers to get involved on either side.

The encounter tables convey more of the town's atmosphere than the ones in the *Carse* book, but they are really little more than ideas that need development to prevent them from coming across as hollow encounters. Again, the encounter charts from *Cities* will be very helpful.

The building descriptions are also longer than in the *Carse* book, which again serves to add more depth to *Tulan of the Isles* and make it the better choice of the two packs. The lands around Tulan also receive more detail than in *Carse*, making it easier to run adventures outside the town. As a bonus, the nearby village of Hoxley is given a detailed treatment that includes a ready-to-run adventure to introduce players to the village and its problems.

**Evaluation:** Of the detailed building-by-building urban settings under consideration this month (THE CITY-STATE OF THE INVINCIBLE OVERLORD, *Carse*, and *Tulan*



of the Isles), *Tulan of the Isles* is easily the best of the three. *Tulan's* atmosphere is not conveyed as well as *Lankmar's*, but the town scores highly in other areas and fits in well with most fantasy systems. This supplement is available from: Chaosium, Inc., P.O. Box 6302, Albany CA 94706-0302, U.S.A.

### Short and sweet

AC11 *The Book of Wondrous Inventions*, by various authors, compiled by Bruce A. Heard. TSR, Inc., \$8.95. Usable with both the D&D and the AD&D game systems, *The Book of Wondrous Inventions* is a real treat for lovers of wacky magical items. Here, you will find all manner of zany labor-saving devices and weird war machines. Are your characters fed up with washing dishes? Then sling the dishes into Melrond's Foolproof Dishwasher. Is your party looking for some portable entertainment next time you go adventuring? Then look no further than Brandon's Bard-in-a-Box. Or maybe you're in the market for devices of mass destruction? Well, there are plenty of these too. In fact, everything you could ever wish for is here. Just in case it's not, there are nifty rules for creating your own magical items — and everything is guaranteed. Yep, that's right: *guaranteed* to go wrong. Nobody said this was a perfect world.

*The Star Wars Sourcebook*, by Curtis Smith and Bill Slavicsek. West End Games, \$14.95. "A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away..." Or maybe not quite so far away. *The Star Wars Sourcebook* is crammed with interesting background on the *Star Wars* universe. Here, you'll find information on hyperdrives, starships, droids, repulsorlift vehicles, aliens, and the heroes from the movies. Written with nongamers in mind, *The Star Wars Sourcebook* makes for an absorbing read, but STAR WARS®: The Roleplaying Game fans will not be disappointed, as each entry comes complete with the statistics for the role-playing game. Now you can see why Han Solo is such a hot pilot and why the heroes rarely get hit. The sections on Imperial Stormtroopers and their equipment is invaluable, as are the descriptions of the rebel bases. With this book, STAR WARS: The RPG becomes even better.

STAR WARRIORS game, by Douglas Kaufman. West End Games, \$19.95. Experience the thrill of starfighter combat in the *Star Wars* universe in this cleverly designed board game by Doug Kaufman. By employing neat, easy-to-use and easy-to-learn mechanics, *Star Warriors* puts you at the controls of an X-wing, TIE fighter, or other spaceship from the movies. Each player has a sheet showing the various

maneuvers available and the difficulty of successfully completing a specific maneuver. Each turn, players place chits for each of their ships to show what maneuvers they are attempting. The difficulty number of each maneuver is then added up and the pilots must equal or better their difficulty score by rolling their piloting dice. It's up to each player to decide how many maneuvers their pilots attempt, but only the highest skilled pilots are likely to pull off a large number of maneuvers. *Star Warriors* combines fast action with careful planning, and it's compatible with the role-playing game. Check it out if you like space-combat games; this one is hard to beat.

*Darrians*, by Marc W. Miller, Robert and Nancy Parker, and Matt Renner. Game Designers' Workshop, \$7.00. At the far edge of the Spinward Marches lies the Darrian Confederation, home to a minor human race with mixed Solomani blood. The Confederation is noteworthy for its possession of the Star Trigger, a device capable of creating huge stellar flares. Before they caused their own star to erupt, the Darrians had achieved the dizzy heights of Tech Level 16. Now the Darrians have lost much of their advanced technology, but the Star Trigger remains a powerful deterrent to any potential aggressors. *Darrians* is the eighth module dealing with the various races inhabiting the TRAVELLER® game universe. It includes the same in-depth treatment of history, politics, culture, physiology, and character generation found in the other modules in the series. This is highly recommended for TRAVELLER game fans everywhere.

*Gnomes-100, Dragons-0*, by Jim Ward and Jean Blashfield. TSR, Inc., \$7.95. What's this: gamebooks in the role-playing reviews section? That's right; this one is too good not to mention. You play Rye the Baker, would-be savior of the gnomes of Mount Nevermind. This large-format book is full of pictures to look at, humorous gnomish devices to laugh at, and a simple yet effective game system to employ. Your task is to collect as many items as possible before the dragon army arrives and squashes the gnomes. To aid you in this heroic endeavor, the gnomes have supplied you with a suit of steam-powered armor. In addition, they allow you to be catapulted around the mountain in their gnomefinger. Each area within Mount Nevermind comes with a full-page illustration, which shows you who you can talk to and what items you can examine. Unfortunately, the book is marred by a few routing errors; I stomped the dragon army into the ground, then turned to entry 118I, only to find that I'd been dumped back into the adventure. Searching through the book for the right entry is not my idea of a dramatic ending!



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# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. **No** call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

**WARNING:** We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December 1988 issue is the last Monday of October 1988. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the copy deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to Rik Rose at TSR UK Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

\* indicates a product produced by a company other than TSR, Inc. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. The use of the name of any product without mention of its trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

## SCIENCE FICTION ART EXHIBITION

**June 27-August 22**

The Orlando Science Center in Orlando, Fla., will feature a collection of art and artifacts from Michael Whelan, Vincent Di Fate, Kelly Freas, and other artists. The show will also have motion-picture artifacts, a film lecture series, and a film festival. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for children, and \$10 for entire families. The Orlando Science Center is located in Orlando Loch Haven Park, just off Interstate 4 in downtown Orlando. Write to: Orlando Science Center, 810 East Rollins Street, Orlando FL 32803-1291; or call: (407) 896-7151.

## OMACON 8, August 5-7

This major Midwest science-fiction, prospace, and gaming convention is sponsored by Nebraskans for the Advancement of Space Development (NASD), and will be held at the Holiday Inn Central, 3321 S. 72nd Street, in Omaha, Nebr. Write to: OMACON 8, P.O. Box 37851, Omaha NE 68137; or call: (402) 476-7176.

## EASTERN N.C. TOY AND HOBBY SHOW

**August 6-7**

This show will be held at the New Cumberland County Agro-Expo Center, just off Highway 301 South, in Fayetteville, N.C. This event includes a swap meet for collectors of comic books and antique and collectible toys, games, model kits, and baseball cards. Daily admission fees are \$3. Write to: Carolina Hobby Expo, 3452 Odell School Road, Concord NC 28025; or call: (704) 786-8373.

## GAME-FEST IX, August 12-21

San Diego's ninth-annual game festival will be held in historic Old Town, San Diego, and will feature over 60 different role-playing and board game events with more than \$1,500 in total prizes. Special events include: game demonstrations; figure painting, diorama, and costume contests; a two-day Grand AD&D® Open; a Steve Jackson Pentathlon; and The Avalon Hill Game Company Classics Tournament. Registration fees, which include entry to all gaming events for all 10 days plus a \$20 coupon book for game purchases, are \$20 if paid by August 1, or \$30 at the door. Write to: GAME-FEST IX, c/o Game Towne, 3954 Harney Street (in Old Town), San Diego CA 92110; or call: (619) 291-1666.

## GOLDQUEST 88, August 12-14

This fantasy and science-fiction convention, sponsored by the Goldquest Clubs of Manasota, will be held in Sarasota, Fla., at the Airport Holiday Inn on U.S. 41. Guests of honor will be Greg Costikyan (the WILLOW\*, PARANOIA\*, and STAR WARS\* games) and Thomas Mulkey (TWILIGHT: 2000\* game). The convention will feature many board, role-playing, and miniatures games (with awards in several categories),

along with miniatures-painting and costume contests. A dealers' room and 24-hour video room will be available. A pool party will be held at 7 P.M. on Friday, August 12, to open the convention. Admission is \$10, or \$12 at the door. Write to: Goldquest Clubs, P.O. Box 1017, Oneco FL 34264-1017; or call and leave your name and address at: (813) 758-0421.

## UNICON 1988, August 18-21

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at King Alfred's Teacher Training College in Winchester, Hants., Great Britain. Confirmed guests as of this point include Patrick Tilley (author of *Mission*, *Fade Out*, and *The Amtrak Wars*) and Michael de Larrabeiti (author of *The Borribles*). Admission fees are £10 for attending memberships; single room rates are £10. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to WINCON. Payments made in U.S. dollars are accepted; registrants should learn the current exchange rates before sending any money. Write to: WINCON, 11 Rutland Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent, Staffs., UNITED KINGDOM; or call: (0782) 271070.

## DRAK CON '88, August 20-21

This year's event will be held in the College Dining Room at the Northern College of Education on Hilton Drive in Aberdeen, Scotland. DRAK CON will run from 9 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. on Saturday and from 9 A.M. to 8:30 P.M. on Sunday. Now in its third year, DRAK CON has the additional aim of raising money for famine relief. Events for this convention will include an AD&D® game tournament. Admission costs for this convention are £5 for adults and £3.50 for children under 16 for both days. Bed and breakfast accommodations may be booked in advance at £8.50 per night. Send an SASE to: DRAK CON '88, c/o S. Douglas, 13 Springbank Terrace, Aberdeen, UNITED KINGDOM AB1 2LS; or call: (0224) 572128. Make all checks payable to "Dragon Aid." All proceeds for this convention go for famine relief.

## HOBBY & COLLECTABLES SHOW August 20-21

This hobby and collectables show will be held from 10 A.M. to 9 P.M. on Saturday and from 12:30 A.M. to 6 P.M. on Sunday. It will be held at the Eastgate Mall on Brainard Road (just off I-75) in Chattanooga, Tenn. There will be 20 tables each of comic books and collectable cards, with 10 tables available for other collectables, including: game materials, Japanimation items, models, artwork, coins, stamps, and more. Admission is free. Tables cost \$75 each. Write to: Amazing World of Fantasy, 1922 Shorter Avenue, Rome GA 30161; or: Bojo's Records and Tapes, 750 Cedar Plaza, Cedartown GA 30125. You also call: Dana at (404) 235-2179; or: Patrick at (404) 234-5309 (after 6 P.M.).

## HOUSTON FANFAIR, August 20-21

Bulldog Productions presents this small, fun comic-book, science-fiction, and film convention. This event will be held at a hotel to be announced. More than 60 dealers' tables, more than a dozen guests of honor, a masquerade, 24-hour gaming sessions, 24-hour video rooms, writers workshops, an open convention suite, and a huge Saturday night party will be featured events. The anticipated attendance for this convention is 600. Tables are available for \$50/\$60. Admission fees are \$4 for Saturday, \$3 for Sunday, and \$5 for both days at the door only. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.



**FESTICON 88, August 27-28**

This gaming convention will be held at the Hotel Syracuse in Syracuse, N.Y. Special events include: AD&D® game tournaments; STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, TRAVELLER\*, and other games; and an art show and costume party. Guests of honor will be announced at a later date. Registration fees are \$10 (which includes the first tournament fee and \$5 for every tournament thereafter. Write to: FESTICON 88, c/o Walden III, 547 Allen Street, Syracuse NY 13210.

**GATEWAY '88, September 2-5**

This gaming convention will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family board game tournaments are offered, as well as various seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitors' area. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374 Village Road, Long Beach CA 90808; or call: (213) 420-3675.

**AUSTIN FANFAIR, September 17-18**

Bulldog Productions presents this small, fun comic-book, science-fiction, and film convention. This event will be held at a hotel to be announced. More than 60 dealers' tables, more than a dozen guests of honor, a masquerade, 24-hour gaming sessions, 24-hour video rooms, writers workshops, an open convention suite, and a huge Saturday night party will be featured events. The anticipated attendance for this convention is 600. Tables are available for \$50/\$60. Admission fees are \$4 for Saturday, \$3 for Sunday, and \$5 for both days at the door only. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214)349-3367.

**VALLEY CON 13, September 24-25**

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Regency Inn, Hwy 75 and I-94, in Moorhead, Minn. The author guests of honor are Robert Asprin, Lynn Abbey, and Eleanor Arnason. The artist guest of honor is Giovanna Fregnie. Featured activities include videos, an art show and auction, numerous panels, dealers, a costume contest and masquerade ball, and a variety of gaming events (courtesy of the Gamers Guild and VALLEY CON). Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for youths 13-17 years old, and \$2 for children 4-12 years old. Send an SASE to: VALLEY CON 13, P.O. Box 7202, Fargo ND 58109; or call: (701)232-1954.

**SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '88****September 30-October 2**

SKIRMISHES presents the eighth-annual production of this popular gaming extravaganza. This event will take place at the Holiday Inn-Ashley Plaza, 111 West Fortune Street in Tampa, Fla. Room rates are \$50 for single or double occupancy. Events include AD&D®, TRAVELLER\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, and CAR WARS\* game events, along with Napoleonic, Seakrieg, and board gaming events, a KILLER\* tournament, a dealers' room, SCA demonstrations, and many other role-playing and historical events. Hotel reservations may be made by calling: (813) 223-1351. Registration fees are \$18 for the weekend. Send your registration fees to receive the program booklet. Write to: SKIRMISHES, P.O. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 299-6784 or (813)293-7938.

**JUST-A-CON, October 1-2**

This broad-scope gaming convention will feature AD&D® and STAR FLEET BATTLES\* tournaments, a miniatures demonstration series (hosted by Larry Bloom), lectures, entertain-

ment, a host of role-playing and war games, a dealers' room, and more. Sponsored by the Commuter Information and Assistance department of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, this event will be held at the Cone Center on the UNCC campus. Send an SASE to: JUST-A-CON I, 9232-35 University City Boulevard, Charlotte NC 28213.

**TOLEDO GAMING CONVENTION VI****October 1-2**

This sixth-annual event will be held at the University of Toledo, Scott Park Campus, Toledo, Ohio. This convention will feature a variety of events, including tournament and demonstration games (role-playing, board, and miniatures), a miniatures-painting contest and clinics, game seminars, computer clubs and dealers, and a game auction (scheduled for both Saturday and Sunday). There will also be a special competition for high-school game clubs, encompassing many types of games. Over 125 games and events have been scheduled thus far. Send an SASE to: Mind Games, 3001 N. Reynolds Road, Toledo OH 43615; or call: (419)531-5540 Monday through Friday, between 4 and 8 P.M.

**COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS 14****October 7-9**

This role-playing, board-gaming, and miniatures convention will be held at the Center City Convention Center in Schenectady, N.Y. The convention will have at least two AD&D® game tournaments (one sponsored by the RPGA™ Network), as well as a number of other AD&D® game events. There will also be TOP SECRET®, RUNEQUEST\*, BATTLETECH\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, DIPLOMACY\*, and many other game events. In addition, this convention will feature an auction, a miniatures-painting contest, and costume contest. Gaming areas will be open 24 hours a day, and will include some all-night events. Registration is \$10 for the weekend, if paid before September 22. At-the-door registration is \$15 for the weekend, or \$4 for Friday and \$7 each for Saturday and Sunday. Event fees range from free to \$3 for each. Write to: COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS, c/o The Studio of Bridge & Games, 1639 Eastern Parkway, Schenectady NY 12309.

**ROVACON 13, October 7-9**

This convention will be held at the Salem Civic Center in Salem, Va. (Roanoke Valley). Gaming events this year will occupy one half of the coliseum floor, with side rooms available for workshops and panels on gaming. Julian May is the guest of honor; she will be joined by Christopher Stasheff, Hal Clement, Judith Tarr, Susan Shwartz, Richard Pini, Kelly Freas, Bob Eggleton, Jean Elizabeth Martin, Lisa Cantrell, Rebecca Ore, and Allen Woldour. Film festivals, an awards banquet, a costume party, and hundreds of dealers' tables will also be offered. Gaming Coordinator Harry Shiflett is still looking for people to help with game mastering; interested individuals should write to him at: P.O. Box 2672, Staunton VA 24401. Write to: ROVACON, P.O. Box 117, Salem VA 24153; or call: (703) 389-9400 after 5 P.M.

**FRONTIER WAR V, October 8-9**

The Dungeon Masters Association will present this two-day event at the Miller Park Pavilion in Bloomington, Ill. Featured events will include role-playing, board, and miniatures games, as well as a dealers' area and open-gaming space. Registration fees are \$3 per day, or \$5 for the weekend. Write to: Dungeon Masters Association, R.R. 2, Box 12, Danvers IL 61732.

**NOVAG IV, October 8-10**

Sponsored by the Northern Virginia Adventure Gamers (NOVAG), this fourth-annual adventure gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn — Washington-Dulles in Sterling, Va. The convention will include all aspects of adventure gaming, from historical board and miniatures games to science-fiction and fantasy role-playing games. Vendors and game presenters are invited. Write to: NOVAG, c/o Wargamers Hobby Shop, 101 E. Holly Avenue, Suite 16, Sterling VA 22170; or call: (703) 450-6738.

**SETCON I, October 8-9**

Sponsored by the RPGA™ Network and SETGA, this gaming convention will be held at the Kingwood Middle School in Kingwood, Texas. Preregistration fees are \$8 for both days; \$5 per day at the door. Write to: Chris Liao, 3502 Oak Gardens Drive, Kingwood TX 77339.

**CHICAGO MODEL & HOBBY SHOW****October 13-16**

Sponsored by the Radio Control Hobby Trade Association, this fourth-annual event will be held at the O'Hare Expo Center in Rosemont, Ill. The convention has expanded by over 10,000 square feet this year in order to accommodate exhibitor demand. Over 2,000 retailers and distributors attended last year's show. Write to: CHICAGO MODEL & HOBBY SHOW, 2400 East Devon Avenue, Suite 205, Des Plaines IL 60019-9353; or call: (800) 323-5155 (in Illinois, call: (312) 299-3131).

**RUDICON 4, October 14-16**

Sponsored by the Rochester Wargamer's Association and Guild, this gaming convention will be held on the campus of the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y. Events will include role-playing, wargaming, and miniatures features, as well as a dealers' room and more. For preregistration or dealers' packets, send an SASE to: RUDICON 4, c/o Student Directorate, One Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester NY 14623.

**CON\*STELLATION VII, October 21-23**

Sponsored by the North Alabama Science Fiction Association, this science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Huntsville Hilton in Huntsville, Ala. John Varley will be the guest of honor, and Todd Hamilton will be the artist guest of honor. Features will include a dealers' room, art show, video room, open gaming, masquerade, SF and fantasy film and video contest, and a con suite. Registration is \$15 until September 6 and \$20 thereafter. Write to: CON\*STELLATION VII, c/o North Alabama Science Fiction Association, P.O. Box 4857, Huntsville AL 35815-4857.

**NECRONOMICON '88, October 21-23**

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Ashley Plaza Holiday Inn in Tampa, Fla. Guests of honor are Alan Dean Foster and Timothy Zahn. Other guests include Richard Lee Byers, Richard Louis Newman, Joseph Green, Mary Hanson-Roberts, Ken and Beth Mitchrone, Ray Aldridge, Ginger Curry, George M. Ewing, and John Brudy. The fan guest of honor will be chosen by a random drawing from all interested members registered by 6 P.M., Friday. The winner will have his membership refunded, receive a banquet ticket, have his hotel room paid for Friday and Saturday, and be allowed to judge the masquerade contest. Featured events include author and artist panels, an art show and auction, a Friday night fan cabaret, a full-contact trivia game, a special

Superman\* trivia contest, role-playing games, filksinging, author readings, a Saturday night masquerade, an Official Vampire Pageant, and a charity auction (scheduled for Sunday afternoon). Membership is \$10 for three days if paid before September 15 and \$15 thereafter. One-day memberships are sold at the door at \$6 per day. Dealers' tables are \$35 plus membership costs for those staffing them. Hotel rates are \$48 for one to four persons. Write to: NECRONOMICON '88, P.O. Box 2076, Riverview FL 33569; or call: (813) 677-6347.

#### **OCTOBERFEST GAMING 1988 October 21-23**

Detroit's yearly Halloween role-playing games convention will once again be sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Department. The location is the Lighthouse Recreation Center on Riverside Drive in Detroit, Mich. Kevin Siembieda (ROBO-TECH\*, PALLADIUM RPG\*, MECHANOID\*, HEROES UNLIMITED\*, and BEYOND THE SUPERNATURAL\* games) and Erick Wujcik (TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES\*, Revised RECON\*, and NINJAS AND SUPERSPIES\* games) are guests of honor. Events include: AD&D®, TRAVELLER\*, and other role-playing games; seminars; and a role-playing costume contest. Admission for this convention is free. Tournaments are \$2 to \$4, with winners receiving gift certificates from local stores. Write to: Erick Wujcik, P.O. Box 1623, Detroit MI 48231; or call: (313) 833-3016.

#### **MAINESIL, October 28-30**

The Maine Society for Interactive Literature will hold this convention at the Hampton Inn in South Portland, Maine. Featured events will include your choice of three live role-playing games, each of which will be run by experienced game masters. These are semireal time, semireal space games (not board games) conducted over the entire weekend. Costumes and participatory play are encouraged for these events. Awards will be given at the closing ceremonies for best costumes and best characterizations. Registration for the convention and one game is \$25. Room rates are \$46 a night, which includes breakfast. Become your character for a weekend! Contact: Heidi Nilsen, 596 Dutton Hill Road, Gray ME 04039 (telephone (207) 657-4072); or Kevin and Susan Barrett, 540 Mammoth Road, Londonderry NH 03053 (telephone (603) 432-5905).

#### **WAR GAMERS WEEKEND, October 28-30**

This convention will be hosted by The Toy Soldier, located in Newburyport, Mass. The convention itself will be held at the Disabled American Veterans Hall (DAV), Route 1, in Newburyport, Mass. Events will include fantasy role-playing, historical miniatures, and board games and demonstrations. Registration for the weekend is \$10, and most events are an addi-

tional \$2. Write to: Chris Parker, c/o The Toy Soldier, P.O. Box 148, Newburyport MA 01950; or call: (617) 462-8241.

#### **UMF-CON, October 29-30**

This role-playing and wargaming convention will be held at the Student Center of the University of Maine at Farmington in Farmington, Maine. Expect miniatures, AD&D®, TOP SECRET®, DIPLOMACY\*, and board games, along with a costume contest (in honor of Halloween), miniatures-painting contest, murder mystery, and "Kare Bear Krunch II." UMF-CON is twice as big this year, but the admission fee has not changed. Registration costs are still \$5, and

\$2 per game. Send an SASE to: Table Gaming Club, c/o Student Life Office, Student Center, 5 South Street, Farmington ME 04938.

#### **QUAD CON 88, November 4-6**

The RiverBend Gamers Association will hold this convention at the Sheraton Hotel, located at 17th Street and 3rd Avenue in Rock Island, Ill. Room rates are at a special nightly rate of \$44 for a single and \$53 for a double. For reservations, call: (800) 322-9803, or (800) 447-1297 if calling from outside Illinois. There is over 3,300 square feet of space in the two gaming rooms and about 2,080 square feet in the dealers' room. Featured events include AD&D®, D&D®, BATTLETECH\*, CHAMPIONS\*, RECON\*, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, and other games, as well as a miniatures-painting contest, microarmor events, an ancients-to-future combat tournament, and a costume contest and party (no weapons, please). Preregistration starts August 1; prices are \$8 for the weekend, if received by October 1. Otherwise, costs are \$10 at the door, or \$5 per day. Write to: RiverBend Gamers Association, P.O. Box 8421, Moline IL 61265.

#### **SAN ANTONIO FANFAIR, November 5-6**

Bulldog Productions presents this small, fun comic-book, science-fiction, and film convention, to be held at a hotel to be announced. More than 60 dealers' tables, more than a dozen guests of honor, a masquerade, 24-hour gaming sessions, 24-hour video rooms, writers workshops, an open convention suite, and a huge Saturday night party will be featured events. The anticipated attendance for this convention is 600. Tables are available for \$50/\$60. Admission fees are \$4 for Saturday, \$3 for Sunday, and \$5 for both days at the door only. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

#### **SCI CON 10, November 11-13**

Sponsored by the Hampton Roads Science Fiction Association, this science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Virginia Beach, Va. David Brin is guest of honor, David Mattingly is

artist guest of honor, Bud Webster is fan guest of honor, and David Cherry is toastmaster. Kelly Freas and other guests will be in attendance. Panels, readings, video presentations, a costume contest, gaming, an art show, and more will also be featured. Memberships are \$15 until September 30 and \$20 at the door. Huckster tables (limit of two per customer and including one membership each) are \$60 each until September 30, and \$75 thereafter (if still available). Send an SASE to: SCI CON 10, Dept. FA, P.O. Box 9434, Hampton VA 23670.

#### **DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, November 25-27**

Bulldog Productions presents this full-scale comic-book, science-fiction, and film convention, which will be held at the Marriott Park Central, 7750 LBJ at Coit, in Dallas, Texas. This event will feature more than 140 dealers' tables, 100 guests of honor, an art show and auction, a masquerade, 24-hour gaming sessions, 24-hour Japanimation and video rooms, artists and writers workshops, readings, a dance, an open convention suite, and much more. The anticipated attendance for this convention is 2,000. Admission fees are \$15 for all three days if paid in advance or \$20 at the door. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

#### **MACQUARIECON '88, December 9-11 ♦**

One of the largest role-playing conventions in Australia will be held on the campus of Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. You'll find AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, PARANOIA\*, WARHAMMER\*, and other games. Prizes will be awarded to winners. Registration is \$12 (Australian), with a \$5 (Australian) discount for entries received before November 1. There is also a \$3 (Australian) fee per game. No entries will be accepted after December 2. Write to: MACQUARIECON '88, c/o MURPS, Box 83 Student Council, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia 2109.

#### **ORCCON 12, February 10-13, 1989**

STRATEGICON will sponsor this convention, which is to be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. All types of family, strategic, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be offered at this convention, as well as flea markets, an exhibitors' room, auctions, seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374 Village Road, Long Beach CA 90808; or call Diverse Talents at: (213) 420-3675.

#### **L.A. ORIGINS '89, June 29-July 2, 1989**

STRATEGICON, the people who brought you L.A. Origins '86, will sponsor this convention, which is to be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton Hotel. All types of family, strategic, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be offered at this convention, as well as flea markets, an exhibitors' room, auctions, seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374 Village Road, Long Beach CA 90808; or call Diverse Talents at: (213) 420-3675.

#### **GATEWAY '89, September 1-4, 1989**

STRATEGICON will sponsor this convention at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. All types of family, strategic, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be offered, as well as flea markets, an exhibitors' room, auctions, seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374 Village Road, Long Beach CA 90808; or call Diverse Talents at: (213) 420-3675.

## **We're Fighting For Your Life.**

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# The Game Fair Update

## *The GEN CON®/ORIGINS™ Game Fair awaits you!*

The biggest extravaganza in gaming history will be less than 20 days away by the time you read this article. The GEN CON®/ORIGINS™ Game Fair 1988 is about to become fact, and you, the gaming public, are going to be the winners.

To date, this convention has been plagued by many problems. The initial loss of judges' packets sent out to solicit games caused the deadline for those submissions to be moved back to April 12, which led to preregistration being equally late. This did, however, lead to a benefit for you. Because we received many events after the deadline, the convention planning committee decided to create a "last chance" publication allowing all who failed to return their preregistration forms early to still have a chance to fill their schedules with the games they wanted. We will continue this "second-chance registration" next year. In addition, this year's retailer program allows you to pick up preregistration forms at local retail outlets.


However, as with any major project, we cannot please everyone. Many of the events filled up much more quickly than we had anticipated, and some people will not get what they want from either registration. It is better to look upon this as a challenge rather than a problem, and to savor all that this convention can be.

If you are a role-player, check out the board-gaming or the miniatures areas. We have some of the finest judges in the country at this convention and more introductory games than I have ever seen in 20 years of gaming. A new way of looking at history, by seeing great battles reenacted and the changing nature of historical battlefields, awaits you. Science-fiction and fantasy games of all types are here; come and enjoy them! And if you primarily

enjoy miniatures and board-gaming fields, explore the world of role-playing for a change, a world in which you worry about one warrior instead of several thousand!

Regardless of your gaming preferences, come and experience the innovations that we have introduced as building blocks for next year's GEN CON Game Fair. The area coordinators' concept puts a person with considerable knowledge of a given area of gaming in charge of that area, meaning more organization and less hassles for you. Two opportunities to register give you more chances to play the games you want. Planned outings and family events mean that the whole family can enjoy the trip. Early judge solicitation gives you the ability to better plan your schedule. We are committed to these things to make this a better convention.

As this convention season comes to a close, I want to thank everyone who has worked so hard to make the miniatures and board-gaming areas successful. To the HMGS, the Gamemaster's Guild of Waukegan and the other Gamemaster's Guilds, and to the CITW and the other clubs, I give a tip of the hat.

We hope that you are as excited about this event as we are. If you haven't made up your mind to attend yet, come and join us anyway; you'll be glad you did. If you want to visit but are uncertain about the events you would like to enter, contact us and we will send registration forms to you. Do it quickly, as it will soon be all over till next year. For packets, check your local retailer or write to: GEN CON/ORIGINS 1988 Registration, c/o TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. 

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# DRAGONMIRTH

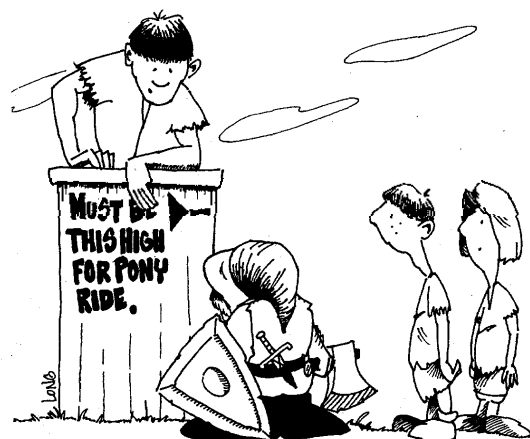
"OH LISTEN DARLING:  
THEY'RE PLAYING  
OUR SONG!"



by Richard Tomasic

TOMASIC

"I'M SORRY SIR. DOZENS  
OF DEADLY QUESTS  
ASIDE, THE RULES ARE  
THE RULES."



by Ray Long

## THE FOUR TYPES OF TROLLS



STONE  
TROLL



CAVE  
TROLL



HILL  
TROLL



ROCK  
TROLL

©'88  
GARY  
FIELDS

by Gary Fields

**"CALL THIS A PERM!"**



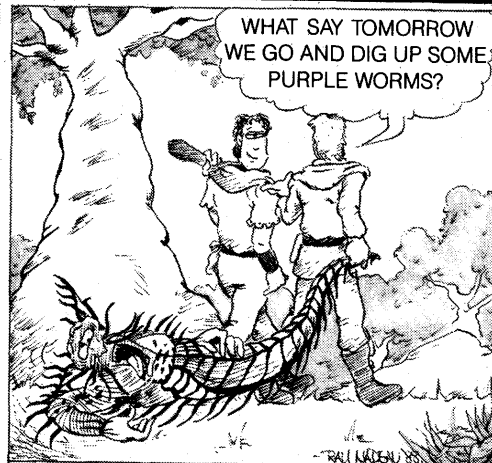
by I. L. Wilding

...OH, YOU KNOW THOSE KIDS!  
THEY'RE DOWN BY THE STREAM  
CATCHING SALAMANDERS!

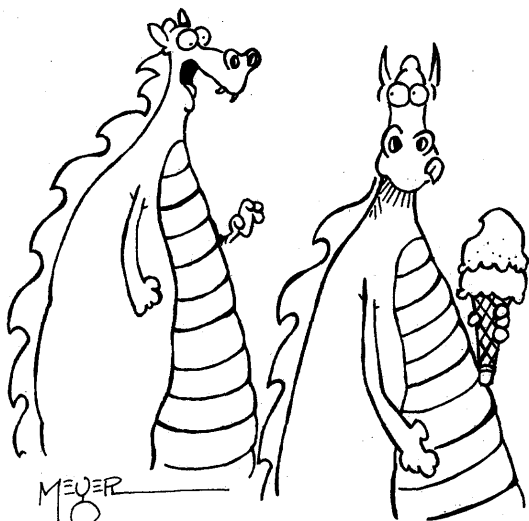


by Ray Nadeau

WHAT SAY TOMORROW  
WE GO AND DIG UP SOME  
PURPLE WORMS?



**"NO THANKS,  
COLD FOOD GIVES  
ME GAS."**



by Dwain Meyer

**"GIMME ALL  
YOUR GOLD...  
AND DON'T  
TRY  
ANYTHING  
FUNNY!"**



by Walt Hackensmith Jr.

**YAMARA**

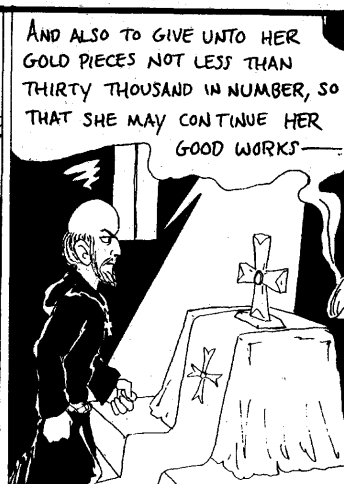
LORD, SO MANY ARE  
NEEDFUL. SHOW ME HOW  
BEST I MAY DONATE  
THE TREASURE I  
HAVE WON  
TO THE  
POOR—



My SON, I SMILE UPON YOUR  
GENEROUS HEART. VERILY, I  
COMMEND THEE TO PURCHASE A  
RING OF INVISIBILITY FOR  
THY GOOD  
FRIEND  
YAMARA...



AND ALSO TO GIVE UNTO HER  
GOLD PIECES NOT LESS THAN  
THIRTY THOUSAND IN NUMBER, SO  
THAT SHE MAY CONTINUE HER  
GOOD WORKS—



SHOULDN'T YOU BE OUT EARNING  
SOME HONEST EXPERIENCE POINTS?



# SNARFQUEST #60 BY ELMORE

© ELMORE '88



MONEY? HOW CAN WE WIN MONEY?

IN THE BIG RACE.



ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS THE CITY MARKS OFF A 20 MILE COURSE ON THE EDGE OF TOWN, OUT IN THE DESERT.

WHAT KIND OF RACE?



AN OPEN CLASS ANIMAL RACE, WITH HARDLY ANY RULES... THE ANIMALS CAN'T FLY AND THEY HAVE TO CARRY, OR PULL, IN A CART, AT LEAST ONE INTELLIGENT BEING.

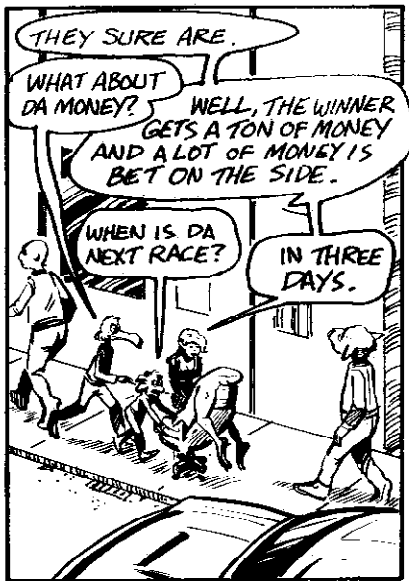
HEY, IT'S ONE TOUGH RACE.



HEY, DA RACE SOUNDS PRETTY SIMPLE.

YES, BUT USUALLY THERE ARE SOME REALLY EXOTIC ANIMALS FROM SOME FAR AWAY PLANETS.

ARE DEY FAST TOO?



THEY SURE ARE.

WHAT ABOUT DA MONEY?

WELL, THE WINNER GETS A TON OF MONEY AND A LOT OF MONEY IS BET ON THE SIDE.

WHEN IS DA NEXT RACE?

IN THREE DAYS.



BEFORE I INVEST ALL OF MY SAVINGS IN THIS CRITTER, I WANT TO SEE HOW FAST IT CAN GO!

WE HAVE A LIL' PROBLEM.

WHAT?

WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO RIDE IT, ONLY SNARF DOES.

HEY, SNARF TOLD ME HOW IT'S DONE. B.B., GO BACK TO DA SHIP AN' GET AVEEARS TOOL BOX, DEN MEET US AT SACKS JUNK YARD AT THE EDGE OF TOWN.

LATER THAT DAY...



OH, BY THE WAY, YOU SHOULD MAKE THE CART BIG ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF YOU.

WHY?

WELL, IN THIS RACE, IT IS FAIR TO KNOCK OUT ALL OTHER COMPETITION... LETHAL WEAPONS ARE NOT ALLOWED BUT BIG STICKS ARE.



THE CREW WORKED ALL NIGHT, NEXT MORNING GEELAH RETURNED.

SO, ONE PERSON IS DA KNOCKER AN' ONE PERSON IS DA DRIVER.

YOU GOT IT.

I BET PEOPLE GETS HURT IN DIS RACE.

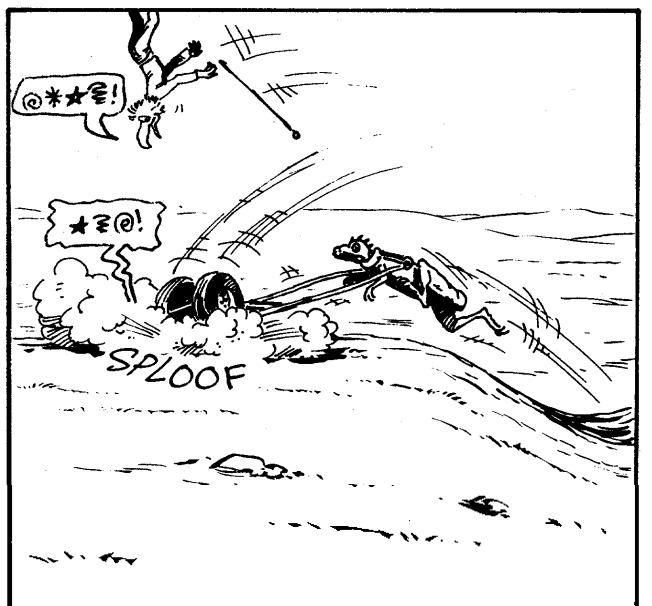
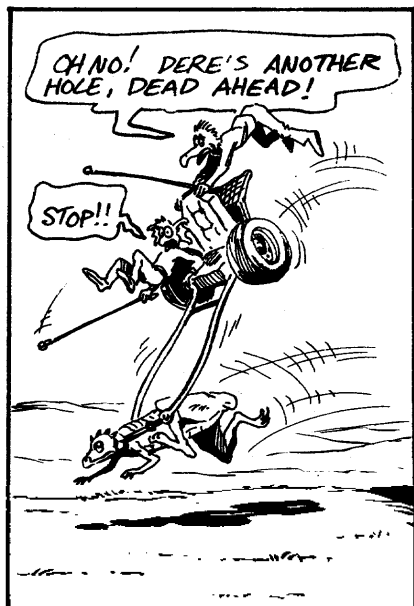
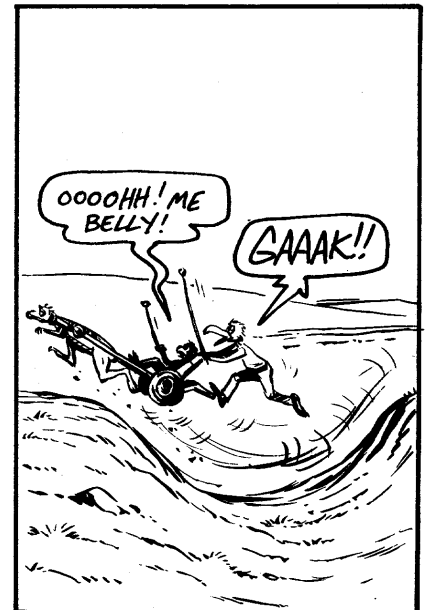
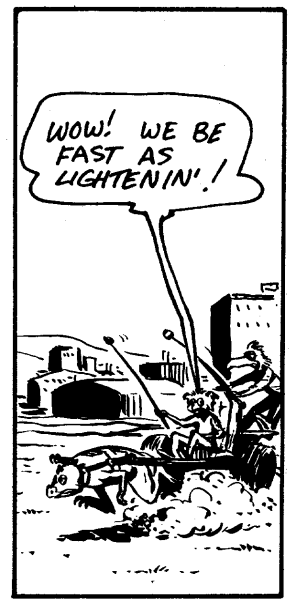
USUALLY.

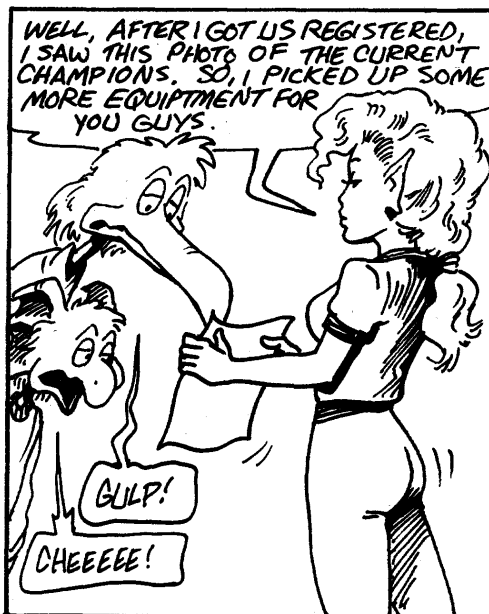
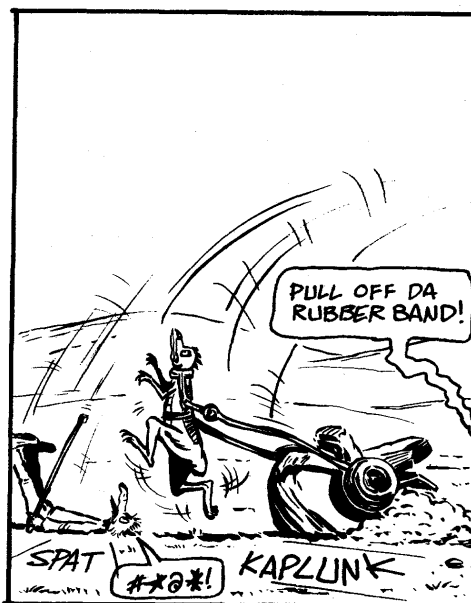


OKAY, LET'S SEE A PRACTICE RUN BEFORE I GO GET US REGISTERED AND PLACE ALL OUR BETS.

BY THE WAY, HOW DOES ALL THAT EQUIPMENT WORK?









# Battle Over Krynn



TSR, Inc. introduces an all-new, exciting fantasy game—The DRAGONLANCE™ Game. Based on the best-selling DRAGONLANCE Saga, this new game can be played by two to six players, ages 10 and up.

Take to the skies on a dragon's back and duel your enemies in 3-D aerial combat as you strive to enter the forbidden tower. One-by-one the weaker dragons fall, leaving only the bravest to vie for control of the legendary dragonlance. Capture the lance and return to your lair to win the game!

The DRAGONLANCE Game has two levels of play. The Basic Game is easy to learn and play; the Advanced Game adds more strategy, variety, and complexity. Either version provides hours of fun for the whole family.

The DRAGONLANCE™ Game is now available at your local toy, book, or hobby store.



# WIN THE BATTLE FOR THE 25<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY



Buck Rogers, the super hero of cosmic combat, blasts off with an all-new adventure boardgame from TSR.

It is the 25th century. A fierce war of colonization and conquest has thrown the inner planets of our solar system into disarray. Warships scream across the blackness of space, cutting swaths of destruction from Mercury to the Asteroid Belt.

In TSR's all-new boardgame, 2-6 players battle planet by planet for control of the 25th century. They launch the nearly 400 piece galactic arsenal of battlers,

fighters, armed transports, killer satellites, and heavily armed ground troopers commanded by six of the inner-solar systems greatest heroes and villains.

You create and command the space armadas and armies. You make alliances . . . and break them. You fight the battle to free or enslave the inner planets.

Ask for this exciting new boardgame at your local toy, book or hobby store.

Watch for new Buck Rogers books, games, and graphic novels . . . coming soon!

*Watch for these books coming this fall.*





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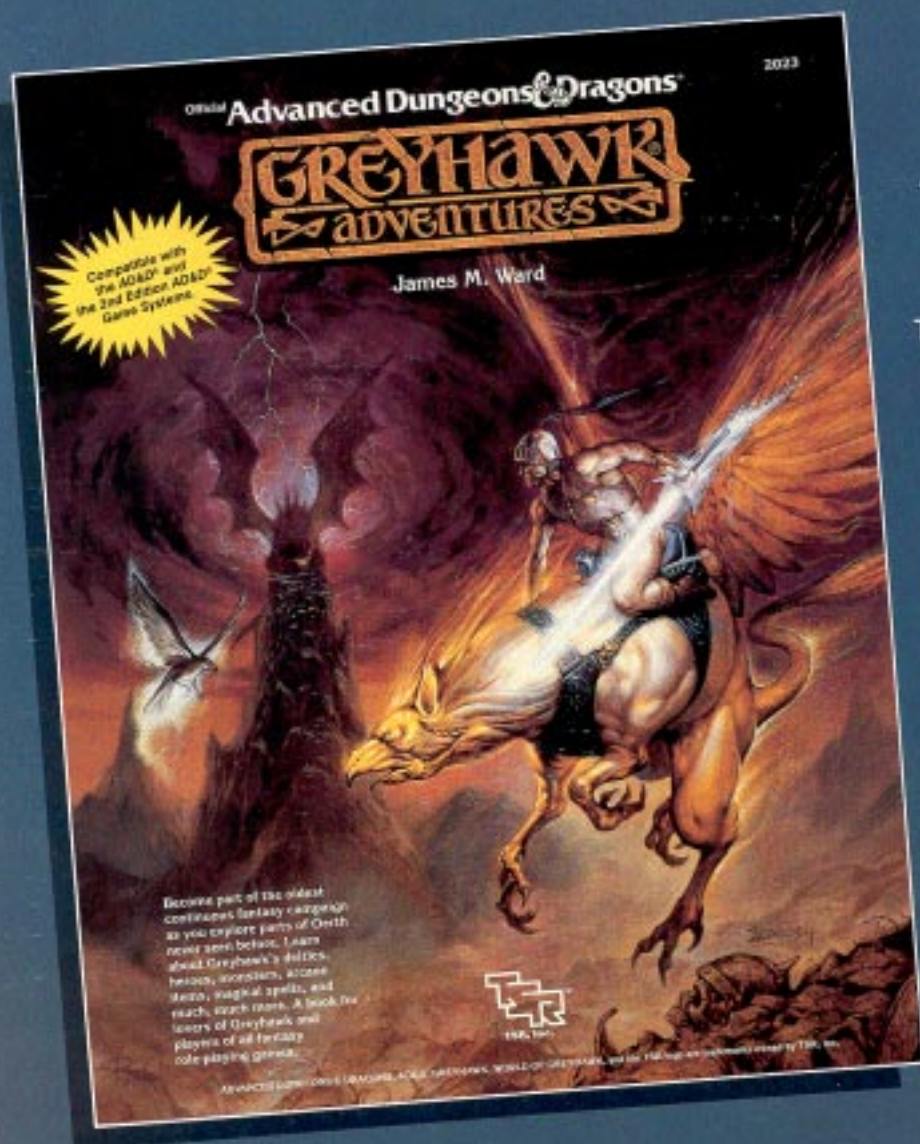
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